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ISSUE 249 AUGUST 2002 £4.20

August 2002 Issue 249



Editor's Comment

There is a certain, very small, group of people in the RISC OS market who think it clever to criticise. You see the Internet is a funny thing, it makes everyone the same size. This is seen in some quarters as a good thing and, on the whole, I agree.

It's a very egalitarian thing, the Internet, and theoretically immune to people trying to take control of it. It has been tried but unsuccessfully so far. The communications networks of the Internet are things you work with, not against.

But there is a downside and that is that those people with a highly destructive bent can make as much noise as anyone else. It makes them seem bigger and more important than they actually are.

Let us try to look at this clearly: This group of people claim that they support the RISC OS market, they say they stand on our side. But all they do is cause discord and trouble. And when tackled on the subject they claim that this is their right, they can say what they like.

Well I'm not one to interfere with human rights but I am one of those who feels that if you abuse a right then you lose it. Your rights are to be protected — they are my rights too. But how about when someone damages another person or company with lies and rumour?

It's not big and it's not clever. At best it is small-minded and selfish, but more likely it is an irresponsible and malicious act by a nasty back-stabber with no awareness beyond his own sad little world.

Now I suspect that I shall become the victim of another attack on the 'Net because I dared stand up and say this. But methinks that those who attack reveal their true motives in doing so.

Rob Donaldson

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Computer systems.................................£13 + vat
All prices are correct going to press. E&OE
All goods are fully guaranteed but not supplied on approval.

PROGRAMMERS NEWS

RISC OS port of ccache

Alex Waugh has announced a port of ccache (release 1.9) which is now available from his Web site. ccache is a compiler cache which can speed up compilation by cacheing the compiler output (currently only when using GCC) and re-using this for subsequent compiles of the same file when appropriate.

Alex would also like to point out that his old "soton" university e-mail and Web site addresses will soon cease to work and that the new addresses given below should be used in preference.

Apart from ccache Alex is the author of PHP, Roots and WebJames all available from his Web site.

Alex Waugh
alex@alexwaugh.com
www.alexwaugh.com

Reverse engineering

While reverse engineering of code is a bad thing (if you don't have permission) it remains a fact that the best way to learn how to program (after doing it yourself) is to figure out what other programmers do. In the case of Assembly code this is a very time-consuming activity but can be extremely rewarding.

To speed up that process it is very handy to use a program that can decode Assembler and recognise typical patterns, for example spotting calls to standard operating system routines and naming them for you. And that's ARMalyser (which is available on various platforms):

ARMalyser is an ARM code analyser that understands RISC OS executable, module, object and library formats. It can output disassembly or ObjAsm assembly styles, in plain text, fully hyperlinked and syntax coloured HTML, XML or custom formats for import into Impression, EasiWriter and Ovation Pro. It is available for RISC OS with a desktop front end, and command line versions for Win32 and Linux x86.

ARMalyser version 0.29 is now available with the following enhancement: Display of additional entry points in C99 32bit Shared C Library stubs jump table fixed so spurious names are not displayed, or cause crashes in the Linux version.

David Ruck
druck@armclub.org.uk
www.armclub.org.uk/free

Game for a library

Routine libraries are always popular among programmers who don't feel the need to do it all themselves and beginning to satisfy that need is a new launch, FANLib, from Bill Kotsias, a Greek RISC OS user

FANLib is a group of libraries developed by Fantasia FAN. Currently, only 32-bit sprite plotting code is available, however it is intended to support a lot more in the future.

Version 0.02 includes:

- updated Transprites library (up to 6x faster than OS_SpriteOp)
- new Frame library
- an all-new manual to get you started
- Transprites demo updated

Although non-moving images don't tell the whole story, every fish you can see in the picture was a separate sprite and moving smoothly over the backdrop — with a variable level of transparency.

Bill Kotsias
fantasia@hol.gr
http://users.hol.gr/~fantasia/fan/fanlib/fanlib.html

Correction

The Oregano KOI8-R/Win-1251 viewer mentioned in the news section of the June issue of Acorn User is not the work of Alex Waugh, but Matthew Somerville — and is available from his site.

He has also announced that he has updated TrackTime — a small program that tells you in which order to fit CD tracks onto a cassette of specified length. The update allows it to cope with more than one CD drive in your computer.

Matthew Somerville
matthew.somerville@trinity.oxford.ac.uk
www.dracos.co.uk/riscos/programs/

MEDIA NEWS

Playing digital movies

KinoAMP is an MPEG movie player from Peter Everett. It is a version of Kino using AMPlayer to play the soundtrack. It is based on Kino v0.3 from eQ R&D, and was produced to provide improved operation on StrongARM machines — but it does not contain any StrongARM-specific code. It needs the AMPlayer module v1.36 or later.

KinoAMP has just been released in a new form with a few little extras and fixes:

- For those really big and really small clips, extra zoom settings have been created at 50%, 300% and 400%
- You can change the zoom setting while playing.
- The maximum colour depth can be set for Auto mode with separate colour settings for Auto and Manual.
- Separate zoom settings for Desktop and Manual modes.
- A window to display information about the last clip played.
- Controls now stay on screen when the picture is too big.
- 256 colour sprites are saved with a palette so greyscale sprites stay grey.

Peter Everett
peter@everett9981.freeserve.co.uk
www.everett9981.freeserve.co.uk/pete.htm

Second user?

Future Computer Services have announced excellent new deals on second user RISC OS hardware with 10bT network cards at £35, A7000s at £35 up to StrongARM Risc PCs for only £350. Check out their Web site for the latest deals available.

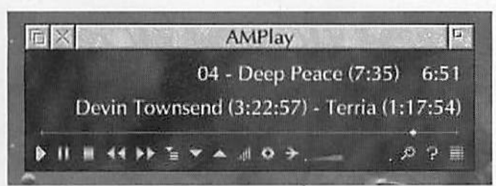
www.futurecomputerservices/acorn/index.html

Play that tune

AMPlay 1.44, a freeware front-end for the AMPlayer module is now available for download from the Web site below. The main download includes the application itself and text documentation. HTML documentation and the (WIMPBasic) source are also available for download.

This latest release contains the following new features and improvements

- When dragging directories on to AMPlay, it uses the hourglass to indicate how quickly tracks are being added to the playlist. 1% on the hourglass is one track being added. This doesn't indicate how far it has to go — it's recursing a directory structure and it doesn't know where the end is until it reaches it — but it does indicate that it is still going.
- When clicking on the Tracks Goto menu, it checks from the current position in the track history to the top of the track history. If the track clicked is found, it moves to it in the history rather than adding the track to the top of the history.



As before if Select is used, it will play the track immediately, whereas if Adjust is used, it will set the current position in the track history so that the specified track is played next. This is most likely to be of use when Queue entire album/artist in random mode is enabled.

- Buttons on the Playlist Editor and the Find Tracks window have had their labels changed. 'Go' has been changed to 'Find', and the 'Apply' button on the Playlist Editor changes between 'Remove', 'Tag', 'Time' and 'Play', depending on the selected action.
- In the playlist editor, the album Apply action button wasn't being ungreyed when changing the action from Play/Queue to Remove Items.
- AMPlay would hang on shutdown (either the application or a machine shutdown) if auto-update maxima was enabled, and all three of the maxima (tracks, albums and artists) needed updating at the same time.

Mike Sandells
mike@mikejs.com
www.mikejs.com/riscos/amplay.html

Satellite crashes down on Internet

We all remember Napster and the legal nightmare that came from music copyright infringement. Naturally the music companies are jealous of their profits although no one has actually managed to prove that the activities of Napster and similar organisations actually damages sales.

On the contrary there is more of an indication that, given the opportunity to try before they buy, the music-buying public are more likely to try new artists and then actually buy their albums.

Naturally we at Acorn User do not approve of copyright infringement, though neither do we approve of disgustingly huge profits being made by deliberate over-pricing.

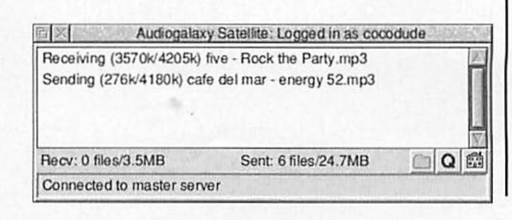
Audiogalaxy was another in the Napster vein and version 1.14 of the Audiogalaxy Satellite for RISC OS is now available and is awaiting your download. But you certainly won't be downloading any illegally distributable music from that site any longer.

As of last month, the Record Industry Association of America and Audiogalaxy signed an agreement whereby all music is blocked unless consent is first given by the copyright holders. This, essentially, makes Satellite only useful for receiving a small subset of music previously available.

This latest release is only really intended for people interested in using the Audiogalaxy service to download music from their hosted artists or others who have allowed free distribution.

The changes between this and the previously released 1.13 include improved protocol conformance, simpler searching and more efficient use of processor time.

Marc Warne
marc@indivisibilities.com
www.alpha-programming.co.uk



Clean up your JPEGs

Sometimes when you download a JPEG image from the Internet, or some other source, you find that all your standard RISC OS applications refuse to load it due to various bits and pieces inserted by the software that created the images.

You can get rid of these extras — or insert some of your own — using the latest, completely re-written version of JClean.

JClean is a desktop front end for the Independent JPEG Group utility 'jpegtran' and allows all operations available from 'jpegtran' to be performed by clicking and drag-and-drop rather than having to resort to the command line.

Version 4.00 is a complete rewrite incorporating more native code to extract existing comments and save them to a single comments file or to individual files, and to insert up to three types of new comment in one pass, including a fully configurable filedate string. Other features include:

- Support for filepaths up to 4K, leafnames up to 255 bytes.
- Optional background or single-task running of jpegtran.
- Optional writeback or save elsewhere of results.
- Configuration of startup behaviour.
- Choice of window size and furniture
- Control of all icon legends and messages.
- Full formatting of date and time insert.
- Choice of workspace, log and comments file locations.
- Up to three levels of reporting by jpegtran.
- Complete logging of processes and reports.
- Up to nine levels of log backup.
- Status display of queued, processed, completed, aborted.
- Pause, step, resume, skip and abort processing.
- Extensive help file and full interactive help.

If you regularly, or even irregularly, need to clean up JPEGs then this is the definitive program to use.

David
david@dacha.freeuk.com
www.dacha.freeuk.com/free/

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(not to scale - it's about the size of two kitchen machboxes!)

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Mices!



MMK!



USB!



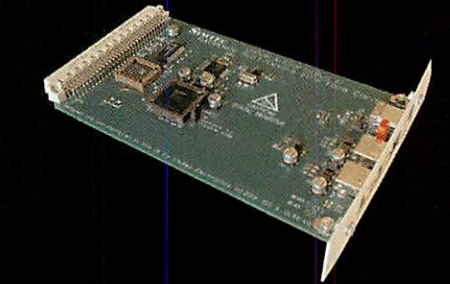
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GAME NEWS

StarFighter revivified

Star Fighter 3000 remains one of the all-time greats of the RISC OS gaming world and Chris Bazley has launched an upgrade for the iSV Products re-release of the game.

The main areas of improvement are in the sound/music module, saved configuration/scores, and more control options:

• Totally overhauled sound module, which now supports 16-bit sound, SharedSound (listen to MP3s while playing the game!), stereo effects and variable polyphony.

• Finally no more problems with thruster noise pitch-bend

• High scores and configuration are now loaded from disc on start-up, and saved to disc when updated.

• Resolved animations inconsistencies — mission files may no longer use animations data from other missions, and deleted corrupt/unused data. Greatly increased number of animations on all missions.

• Implemented support for both analogue (PC) and switched (Atari) joysticks. Added "SW JOYSTICK" and "AL JOYSTICK" to the existing CONTROL options, as a short-term solution until menus are reorganised.

• Made almost all sound effects positional — with stereo position based upon the direction and volume based upon the distance of the sound. Thus distractingly loud thumps and laser fire can no longer be heard from battles occurring miles away.

• Animated ground tiles no longer miraculously spring back to life after having been totally destroyed.

• Now easier to use cheat codes, since specific cheat activation/deactivation messages are displayed instead of just 'PASSWORD INCORRECT'. Plays jolly tune first time cheat code entered.

There have also been many other minor improvements and bug fixes, details of these are available on the game's Web site.

Currently the new sound module does not support the old 8-bit logarithmic sound system, only the 16-bit linear sound system (introduced in RISC OS 3.6) or SharedSound.

A StrongARM machine is the minimum necessary to play MP3s (through a module-based music player like AMPlayer) while also running the game at a decent speed.

Chris has also announced the forthcoming SFeditor which is a complete mission/map editor for Star Fighter 3000, to be made available soon.

Christopher Bazley
chrisbazley@bigfoot.com
http://starfighter.acornarcade.com

Hard disc power

How do you fancy a hard disc that is the size and weight of a pen, that has no separate power supply and can be plugged in and out of your computer with ease?

They exist. These are solid-state devices with no moving parts, plugged into a USB port and powered from the USB port itself.

These devices need a standard USB mass storage device driver and look exactly like any hard disc or removable media that you can plug into a USB slot. They can be formatted to any particular operating system's format using the appropriate software and so, for example, if you had a PC formatted version then with the appropriate driver you could read it via RISC OS using one of the USB cards available.

Supplied by ECB Direct this hardware comes in sizes from 64Mb up to 1Gb of memory Ñ although the biggest will take a while to be delivered currently there's only one in the country.

Added to this the units are very stylish and now come with a "pen-clip" which means that you can cimply plug it into your pocket.

Why would you want one? Transferring large amounts of data from one computer to another for one thing. One company which previously supplied its staff with laptops has, after losses of machines increased dramatically has given one of these units to each staff member and insisted they keep the machine at home and transfer files using the memory unit only.

It may well be the way of the future.

Assembler programming

If you really want to learn to program in ARM assembler, with tutorials and examples, then the teaching site from Rick Murray is definitely the place to go.

The assembler programming part of his site has recently been updated with:

• Website Central

• More history of the development of the ARM processor, and an expanded description of the processors.

• Debugging

• More details on co-processors, and on how the FPE works.

This is a well-organised and extremely useful site with lots of background information as well as the tutorials themselves. Definitely worth a look.

Rick Murray
rick@heyrick.co.uk
www.heyrick.co.uk/assembler/

Image Proxy update

Darren Windsor of Image Software has informed us that work has been progressing nicely over the past few weeks on their ImagePrxy, the proxy server application for RISC OS. Originally ImagePrxy was intended as a dedicated HTTP caching proxy server, however recent developments have seen the functionality of the software expanded.

Aside from various bug fixes and performance improvements the server now supports user configured port proxying. This allows the user to configure the application to proxy SMTP, POP, and so on in addition to the in-built support for HTTP.

So, what does this all mean ? Well, basically it means that your main RISC OS machine can act as a powerful gateway to the Internet for your entire network (whether it be a complete network of RISC OS machines or a mix of RISC OS, Windows, Mac OS and Linux boxes). It means that your home, office or school network can share a single Internet connection, allowing all users access to the Web, email, and other services from their own machines, across your local area network.

Although, by no means a major upgrade (work continues on FTP, SOCKS and HTTPS support) Image Software is making the current version available to registered users as it offers a number of improvements and (some quite major) bug fixes.

Image Software
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M: 07740 622861
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W: www.imagesoft.co.uk

Nutmeg for Oregano

It looks like Darren Windsor at Image Software has been very busy over the last few weeks in addition to his ImagePrxy release he has also launched a new version of Nutmeg for Oregano. This new version includes improved caching and cache retrieval speeds, a number of bug fixes and improved memory management, including support for dynamic areas.

Darren has performed some informal speed checks with the following results:

Site	Initial (s)	Nutmeg (s)
Yahoo	12.5	4.3
Lycos	20.6	6.7
IMDB UK	42.0	11.4
RISC OS Ltd	49.8	6.8
Acorn User	26.3	6.2
Cybervillage	14.5	3.8
BBC news	33.2	10.9
Slashdot	34.9	9.0

The page being fetched is the index page of the site stated. The 'Initial' time is the number of seconds taken to perform the initial fetch (from request to completion). 'Nutmeg' is the time taken to retrieve the page from Nutmeg (again, from request to completion) once the page has been cached. These tests were performed using a 200MHz StrongARM Risc PC and a 56K modem. Naturally the initial load times are dependent on network traffic, server loading and so on.

As you can see, the results speak for themselves. Nutmeg speeds up the re-visiting of sites dramatically and provides a much smoother Web surfing experience.

If you haven't already done so, you can invest in a copy of Nutmeg for only £20 (fully inclusive). Registered users receive upgrades free of charge. If you are a registered user please contact us to confirm your e-mail address is on our upgrade mailing list. Upgrades will be sent out to registered users in due course.

Image Software (UK)
48 Hinchliffe Road
Poole
Dorset BH15 4ED
T: 01202 269720
M: 07740 622861
F: 01202 685072
E: sales@imagesoft.co.uk
W: www.imagesoft.co.uk

NetFetch upgraded

R-Comp have also been busy with their network software and have announced that NetFetch 1.04 has been sent out to existing registered customers — if you feel you should have received the upgrade, but have not done so, please get in touch with them via e-mail.

The new version allows e-mail boxes to be temporarily disabled, and then re-activated at a later date, by simply selecting "Disable" or "Enable" from the menu. There have been a couple of other small changes too.

For those unfamiliar with NetFetch, it is a version of their well-known DialUp program for people accessing the Internet via a network or via broadband. In these instances, the "Dial" part of DialUp isn't required, so NetFetch came about. It has subsequently been extended to fit the differing requirements of network users.

NetFetch is bundled with all RCI's range of network routers for cable, ADSL or modem sharing but is also available separately.

R-Comp Interactive
22 Robert Moffat
High Legh
Knutsford
Cheshire WA16 6PS
T: 01925 755043
F: 01925 757377
W: www.rcomp.co.uk

Get on the ADSL trail

RCI (part of R-Comp) has an exciting ADSL package which comes with all the software manuals and support that you will need to get yourself running at a much higher speed on the Internet.

What you get:

- The ADSL router which includes the ADSL modem, so you don't need to buy that separately
- Four network ports for hooking in your machine (they are high speed 10/100 ports)
- Cable for hooking into your phone line
- Step-by-step manuals describing how to set it up
- RISC OS software (NetFetch)
- Comprehensive technical support

All for only £155 inclusive of VAT and UK delivery. If you already have a network, there are also versions without the four high speed network ports. Additionally, the ADSL router unit does not require the use of micro-filters on the phone lines, saving you even more money.

All you need to take advantage of this, is to be in an area capable of having ADSL. You can then sign up with an Internet Provider (Pipex, FreeUK, Demon or BT) prices and payment deals vary, but are likely to be up to £30 per month — shop around.

If you don't already own a network card, RCI also offer some bundle packs with the new NET100 NIC network cards, so that you can get everything at once.

R-Comp Interactive
22 Robert Moffat
High Legh
Knutsford
Cheshire WA16 6PS
T: 01925 755043
F: 01925 757377
W: www.rcomp.co.uk

Other news

Fitting graph curves

GraphDraw is a very useful utility that allows the entry, editing and plotting of x,y values. Once the data has been entered the "Best fit" for the data can be calculated in four different ways, as:

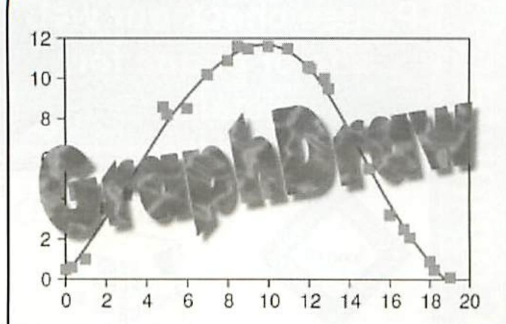
- best straight line (linear or logarithmic)
- best parabola
- cubic spline curve
- polynomial of order up to six.

The resulting graph may be printed via any standard RISC OS printer driver, saved as a draw file, or exported as a MultiPlot file (MultiPlot is another of Chris's applications) to allow several graphs to be combined.

An updated version of GraphDraw (now at version 2.62) is now available from the following sites:

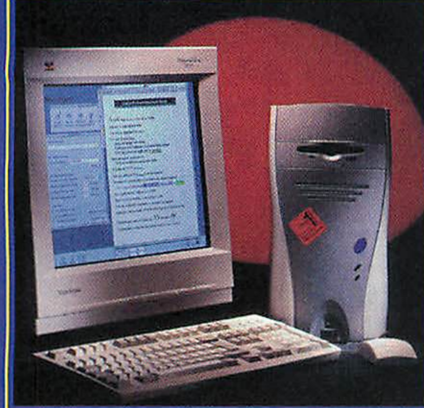
www.bulldog.unet.com/software/graphdraw.htm
www.chrisjohnson.org.uk/software/graphdraw.html
www.graphdraw.riscos.org.uk

As with many RISC OS programmers at this time of the year, the earlier academic (hw.ac.uk) URL will cease to be available towards the end of July.



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Item	Price
Mico	£715.50
Omega	£1179.00
Case and PSU upgrades/Expansion cards	£Cal

RiscStation Computers

Item	Price
R7500 Lite	£598.[illegible]
R7500 Lite+	£656.75
R7500 NetWorx	£480.50
R7500 NetWorx HD	£539.30
R7500 Scorcher	£797.50
R7500 Scorcher Twindeck	£833.00
Osaris	£180.00
Osaris Plus pack	£210.00
Osaris Classroom pack	£857.50
Portable	£1173.00
Portable with docking station	£1465.00
Games pack (with a system)	£47.00

Risc PC Kinetic 300 series

Item	Price
Kinetic Ek (32+4+2Mb, 10Gb HD, 48x CD)	£1105.00
Kinetic DVD (64+4+2Mb, 10Gb HD, DVD)	£1179.00
Kinetic (128+4+2Mb, 30Gb HD, CD R/W)	£1299.00
Kinetic Internet (128+8+2Mb, 30Gb, 48x, 56K)	£1409.00
Kinetic CD Writer (70Mb, 30Gb, CD R/W, 17")	£1505.00

Risc PC StrongARM series

Item	Price
Risc PC 8+0Mb, 2Gb HD	£890.00
Risc PC 16+0Mb, 4Gb HD	£948.00
Risc PC 16+2Mb, 4Gb HD, 48x CD	£1039.00
Risc PC 32+2Mb 8Gb, DVD CD	£1099.00
Web Wizard – 32+2Mb, 8Gb HD, CD, speakers, Internet pack with Oregano & 56K modem	£1179.00

Monitors

Item	Price
iiyama 1352 (15" FST)	£122.75
iiyama Vision Master 1401 (17" SF)	£210.00
iiyama Vision Master 1402 (17" FST)	£165.50
iiyama Vision Master 406 (17" SF)	£241.20
iiyama Vision Master 407 (17" SF)	£241.20
iiyama Vision Master Pro 1411 (17" NF)	£188.25
iiyama Vision Master Pro 413 (17" HBNF)	£226.25
iiyama Vision Master 1451 (19" FST)	£206.00
iiyama Vision Master 452 (19" SF)	£300.50
iiyama Vision Master Pro 452 (19" NF)	£375.75
iiyama Vision Master Pro 453 (19" NF)	£321.50
iiyama Vision Master Pro 454 (19" HBNF)	£486.00
iiyama Vision Master 505 (21" FST)	£606.75
iiyama Vision Master Pro 511 (22" NF)	£588.00
iiyama Vision Master Pro 512 (22" NF)	£669.75
iiyama Pro-Lite 3817 (15" LCD)	£384.00
iiyama Pro-Lite 3819 (15" LCD)	£431.75
iiyama Pro-Lite 3835 (15" LCD)	£475.25
iiyama Pro-Lite 4314 (17" LCD)	£573.00
iiiyama Pro-Lite 4315 (17" LCD)	£657.50
iiiyama Pro-Lite 4332 (17" LCD)	£771.50
iiiyama Pro-Lite 4611 (18" LCD)	£782.50
iiyama Pro-Lite 4636(18.1" LCD)	£894.00
iiyama Pro-Lite 4637 (18.1" LCD)	£975.50
iiyama Pro-Lite 4831 (19" LCD)	£1445.00



Memory Upgrades

Please call to check current prices.

Risc PC/A7000/RiscStation/Mico SIMMs:

Item	Price
16Mb FPM	£28.20
32Mb EDO (HC, works in Risc PCs)	£26.75
64Mb EDO (works in Risc PCs)	£39.00
128Mb EDO	£77.55
2Mb VRAM	£92.00

Music & Sound Section

Please call for other musical items

MIDI interfaces:

Item	Price
MIDI Max II internal 1x1x1	£93.95
Parallel Port 1x1x1 (back in stock)	£92.95
RiscStation MIDI drivers & cable	£17.95
RiscStation XG card & cable	£116.95
RiscStation XG card, cable & keyboard	£245.95
Sibelius 6	£99.95
Sibelius 7 Student	£319.95
Sibelius 7	£520.95
Sibelius for PC/Mac is also available	
Sound module serial driver	£37.95

Other Hardware

Item	Price
10/100BaseT ethernet card (RCI/Simtec)	£89.00
Mouse (Genius/STD Acorn-compatible)	£19.95
Mouse (PS/2 Logitech)	£14.99
PS2MouseMini adaptor for older machines	£18.95
Printers	£Call
Risc PC second slice (no PSU)	£95.00
RISC OS 4 (fitting & Select available)	£109.95
RiscStation second serial port	£10.95
Scanners	£Call
StrongARM & RISC OS 3.7	£269.00
StrongARM & RISC OS 4	£299.00
ViewFinder card (32Mb)	£240.00

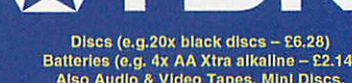
Other Software

Item	Price
Abuse	£20.00
CD Burn	£55.95
Chaos Engine	£19.50
DataPower 2	£165.00
Doom+ CDs	£30.00
Descent CDs	£25.00
Desktop Repton 3 CD	£15.95
DialUp & Messenger Pro	£54.95
EasiWriter Pro+	£139.95
FastSpool+	£17.50
Grapevine	£25.00
Heroes of Might & Magic 2	£32.00
Krisalis Collection Gold CD	£25.95
OHP 2	£37.95
Oregano CD	£57.50
Other Worlds CD	£17.95
Ovation Pro	£138.95
Personal Accounts	£44.00
Photodesk Olympic	£127.95
Prophet 3+ Pro	£179.00
Quake	£22.00
R-Comp Internet Suite	£68.95
Schema 2	£121.50
SiteWriter	£58.95
Sleuth 3	£65.95
Sound Plugin	£11.50
SVG Plugin	£11.50
Syndicate+	£26.50
TBA Games CD	£20.00
TechWriter Pro+	£209.95
TEK	£29.95
WebFX3D	£24.50

Books & Manuals

Item	Price
RISC OS Manuals CD	£29.95

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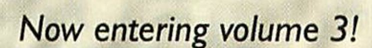
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RISC OS 4 upgrade plus Select subscription: £179

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(for existing RISC OS 4 users)

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Please see our Web site for further pricing details, overseas prices etc.

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- "The whole CD is a joy, and something our platform can be proud of."—*Geoff Steeper*
- "The Foundation CD has contradicted my opinion that I wouldn't be able to read a CD magazine happily. It's very nicely laid out."—*Fred Bambrough*
- "Congratulations on Foundation RISC User… it works smoothly, looks good and has masses of useful and interesting content."—*Gavin Wraith*
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UK: **£33**+VAT (£38·78); EC: **£35**+VAT (£41·13); Non-EC countries in Europe: **£35** (no VAT); Postal Zone 1: **£37** (no VAT); Zone 2: **£39** (no VAT)



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Yellow Toaster Pops Up Again

Our celebration of the twelfth birthday of Arcade BBS in June 2002 by endowing it with always-on ADSL Internet, seems to have started something of an ANSI revival. Andrew Timmins is Senior Software Engineer at Psyche Solutions Ltd. of Cradley Heath, West Midlands, a company that offers an array of online commerce services on the cutting edge of internet technology.

Back in the mid-1990's Andrew was an eager young Acorn enthusiast programmer, just starting his career. He wrote and demonstrated his freeware Web page designer called !HTMLWiz to Acorn computer clubs, but the rest of his spare time then was taken up with operating The Yellow Toaster Bulletin Board. Then suddenly everyone discovered the Internet.

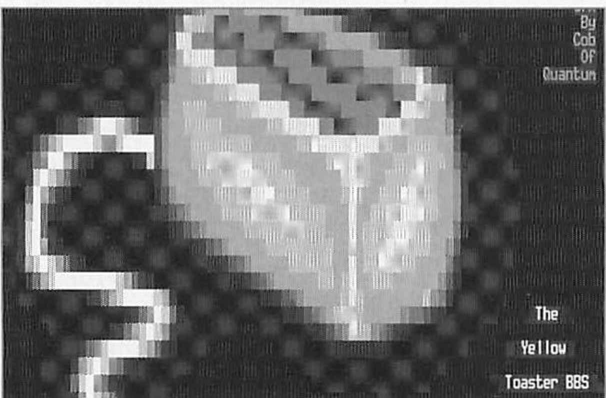
More than half a decade later, Andrew has fond memories of running Yellow Toaster, and remembers the Acorn community spirit and feeling of belonging to something that logging on to a BBS gave us. These sentiments are sadly lacking in the Internet equivalents today Andrew feels, and I certainly agree with him. What better reason does he need to help to recreate the Acorn Spirit that we all had?

theyellowtoasterbbs
www.yellowtoaster.co.uk
click here to enter the bbs
(telnet client required)

A couple of slices of history

Although Yellow Toaster runs the original RISC OS ArmBBS software by Keith Hall on a StrongARM 16Mb RAM Acorn Risc PC, the Internet connection is right up-to-date with Blueyonder Broadband cable. Andrew has taken advantage of TeleWest's brand new 1Mbps service, which costs £35.00/month if you take other TW services, or £39.99 if you don't.

With connection speeds of 1024kbps downstream and 256kbps towards the BBS caller, Andrew describes his system as a weird hybrid. A Linux box is used as firewall to the Risc PC for Telnet and Web traffic while handling Mail and FTP itself. The Filebase for the BBS and FTP server resides on yet another Linux box fitted with an 80Gb RAID hard disc array.



Half-close your eyes and it's there!

To get round the problem of dynamic IP address allocation by TeleWest Blueyonder, Andrew combines the hosting of his yellowtoaster.co.uk domain name by Psyche with a free DNS2Go static real name to dynamic IP address mapping service (http://dns2go.deerfield.com/home/), which keeps the domain name always pointing to his system's currently assigned IP address. This will allow all Yellow Toaster BBS users to have a POP3 mailbox of their own. Andrew hopes the BBS will look and feel just like it did in the old days, but with even better facilities and speed.

You can judge for yourself by browsing the Web site at www.yellowtoaster.co.uk, and logging in to Yellow Toaster BBS itself by telnet to telnet://telnet.yellowtoaster.co.uk/

David Dade
comms@acornuser.com

In brief

Slice Spam, Junk Mail

"Complain to the ISP of the spammer" is the approach taken by Mike Williams' !JunkMail2 spam scanner. The likelihood of forged headers can make human visual inspection difficult without online tools on hand to verify IP addresses and domain names. Junkmail2 scans the message headers of spam e-mails looking for clues to the origin of the message, and prepares suitable complaint messages for you to send to the relevant ISP. Download the latest version from Mike's Little Web Page.
Junkmail2 v2.34 by Mike WIlliams
www.econym.demon.co.uk/junkmail/index.htm

Watch your speed

ADSL and Cable modem owners have this irrational and irresistible urge for more and more speed, and want to keep checking up that they're getting what they're paying for. Several Web sites offer download and upload speed tests including that most essential of Broadband review sites, adslguide.org.uk. Many other speed test sites sprinkle your screen with pop-ups and other unwanted material, and most expect you to be using Windows and Java or JavaScript, so some RISC OS browsers may be excommunicated from the fun.
ADSLGuide.org.uk Broadband Speed Test
www.adslguide.org.uk/tools/speedtest.asp
PC Pitstop Internet Connection Center (!)
www.pcpitstop.com/internet/default.asp
The Bandwidthplace.com
www.thebandwidthplace.com/speedtest/

Character Encoding

I recently re-visited the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) HTML Validator site operated by Gerald Oskoboiny, and was embarrassed to be told that some HTML pages I'd written could not be checked. The Validator emphasises that it is very important for the character encoding of any XML or (X)HTML to be clearly labelled, which I had omitted. My favourite !HTMLCheck validation program by Tom Hughes doesn't need this although a DOCTYPE declaration is required, as does the W3C Validator. The easiest declaration method is in a META tag within the HEAD section, such as

<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=ISO-8859-1">

W3C HTML Validation Service
http://validator.w3.org

A simple approach to logos

Advertising is not as straightforward as it seems. Most people would assume that a television advert, for example, is there to sell a product. That might be part of its purpose, but it's perhaps more important to get the company's name known. Many buyers will choose a Hotpoint washing machine over a Bloggs washing machine, even though they may be identical appliances. Why? Because, the reasoning goes, Hotpoint must be OK because you've heard of them. People tend to be reassured by fact that they've seen the manufacturer on TV; it's almost like a recommendation from a friend.

Every piece of paper with your company's name on it says something about you: letters, promotional leaflets, packaging, your van, Web site. They all carry a message about what kind of business you run. The more professional you look to potential clients, the more they will trust you with their business. If your stationery looks professional, that will be the first reassurance. Equally, if your letterhead is a badly-designed, photocopied sheet, your customers may not have confidence in your abilities.



We're going to start by looking at logos. A logo or trademark is a symbol which you identify with a company or organisation. It's often — but not always — coupled with the company's name, and you tend to find that once a logo has been devised it's applied to everything.

Is it essential to have a logo? Not really. It can be useful to have an identifying mark, and it can be an effective design element when you're working out your business cards, letterheads, etc, but you can live without.





Now that we've decided to have a logo, what form will it take? It could be anything from a geometric shape or abstract symbol (such as the Nike tick), a picture which symbolises what the organisation does (the WWF panda), a logotype — a stylised rendering of the company's name (such as Boots or Coca Cola), or a single letter which comes to symbolise the firm (the golden arches "M" of McDonald's or the "C" of Cerilica).

Our fictitious company this month will be Bloggs Plumbers, who want a new logo. The first attempt is going to be ultra simple, and can be used by virtually anyone whether they regard themselves as having artistic talents or not.

In Draw, Artworks, or Vantage, type out the name Bloggs Plumbers; copy it half a dozen times and space them out. Give each one a different font, and look at them for a while. Do any of them stand out to you? If not, try again with some other fonts. When you like the look of one of the fonts, copy it a few times and get rid of the others. Look at the "B" in Bloggs and decide whether it could be attractive enough to stand alone. Change the font to a path object (in Draw, Select-Convert to path; in Artwork Ctrl-N) and isolate it. Try it in a few different colours, but don't go for weak colours (one criterion you should have when it comes to colours is that it should reproduce in a photocopy). If it looks good you could have yourself a new, very simple logo.



Another trick is to make the letter white against a strong geometric shape such as a square, circle or kite. That creates an impression more of a badge or trademark. Then combine it with the company name.

Another approach would be to use an image which describes what the firm does. I find that brainstorming can help in the earlier stages: take a blank piece of paper, write the company name at the top and then start scribbling anything that comes into your head. Don't spend too long on one particular design, but if it has potential, follow it up. Try different ways of rendering it.

Right: Bloggs Plumbers. What do they do? What do people envisage when they think of plumbers? Baths? Pipes? Sinks? Water? Taps? Dripping taps? A quick brainstorm leads me to think that a drip of water might make a good symbol for a plumber. A simple, quick drawing in Draw can suffice and, combining it with the firm's name, it can give you another simple logo combination.



Again, you can "reverse" your logo so that it's white on a coloured background. Often that gives it a fuller, more self-contained appearance. Another avenue was explored using the shape of a tap and a flowing line through the text to suggest water.

There we have two simple approaches to logo design which anyone can try; and simplicity is the watchword. Anything too involved or fancy can get lost at small sizes. A great logo should look good in every form, plain or reversed out. It should reproduce well at small sizes (on business cards) and at large sizes (for exhibitions or vehicle livery for example). Once you've decided on your logo, use it on everything. You want people to see and instantly associate it with you and your business.

Nigel Gatherer
graphics@acornuser.com

Logitech Mice

Logitech Optical Mice	exc VAT	inc VAT
Wheel Mouse Optical PS2/USB	27.00	31.72
Wheel Mouse Optical with Acorn Adapter	39.00	45.82
MouseMan Wheel Optical PS2/USB	42.00	49.35
MouseMan Wheel Optical with Acorn Adapter	54.00	63.45
Pilot Wheel Mouse Optical PS2/USB	**18.00**	**21.15**
Pilot Wheel Mouse Optical with Acorn Adapter	30.00	35.25


Cordless Optical Mouse


Cordless MouseMan

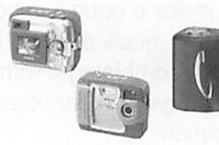

Pilot Wheel Mouse Optical

Logitech Corded Mice	exc VAT	inc VAT
Mini Wheel Mouse PS2/USB	17.00	19.97
Mini Wheel Mouse with Acorn Adapter	29.00	34.07
Pilot Wheel Mouse PS2/USB	17.00	19.97
Pilot Wheel Mouse with Acorn Adaptor	29.00	34.07

Logitech Cordless Mice	exc VAT	inc VAT
Cordless Wheel Mouse PS2/USB	28.00	32.90
Cordless Wheel Mouse with Acorn Adaptor	40.00	47.00
Cordless MouseMan PS2/USB	46.00	54.05
Cordless MouseMan with Acorn Adaptor	58.00	68.15
Cordless TrackMan PS2/USB	39.00	45.82
Cordless TrackMan with Acorn Adaptor	51.00	59.92
Cordless Optical Mouse PS2/USB ***NEW***	38.00	44.65
Cordless Optical Mouse with Acorn Adaptor ***NEW***	50.00	58.75

Digital Cameras

Epson Digital Cameras	exc VAT	inc VAT
PhotoPC 2100Z (3.1 MegaPixel) - CompactFlash	305.53	359.00
PhotoPC 3100Z (4.8 MegaPixel) - CompactFlash	467.23	549.00



GV10


QV2900


QV3500

QV4000

Casio Digital Cameras	exc VAT	inc VAT
GV10, 1.3 mega pixel, CompactFlash. *Watertight design*	237.38	278.92
QV2900, 2.11 mega pixel, CompactFlash, 8x optical zoom	351.25	412.72
QV3500, 3.34 mega pixel, CompactFlash, 3x optical zoom	316.25	371.59
QV4000, 4.13 mega pixel, CompactFlash, 3x optical zoom	450.00	528.75
Casio Camera Power Adaptor	29.00	34.07

Digital Camera Accessories

Digital Camera Media Card Readers	exc VAT	inc VAT
CompactFlash Parallel Reader with RISC OS Drivers	79.00	92.82
SmartMedia Parallel Reader with RISC OS Drivers	79.00	92.82
+ Add Photodesk's PhotoShow Software	20.00	23.50
+ Add Warm Silence Software's Win95FS	25.00	29.37

Long Life Digital Camera Batteries	exc VAT	inc VAT
5 Hour Charger with 2 sets of 4 AA 1500mAH Batteries	20.00	23.50
Additional 2 pack of AA 1500mAH Batteries	5.00	5.87

Digital Camera Media

SmartMedia Media	exc VAT	inc VAT
8MB	8.40	9.87
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3817, 15" TFT


3819, 15" TFT


3835, 15" TFT

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4611, 18" TFT


4636, 18.1"TFT


4637, 18.1" TFT


4831, 19" TFT

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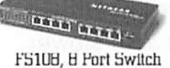
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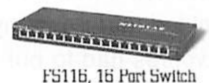
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Fast linkages

Acorn hardware was for quite some time designed with network capability in mind Ñ although generally not installed as standard, as far back as the BBC series there's been a space left to install an econet module, and the RiscPC (and A7000) came with a slot that could house a Network Interface Card (NIC).

However, networking has been one of the areas that has suffered a little neglect since the demise of Acorn Computers, with the once industry standard 10baseT having long since been replaced by 100baseT, with even faster products available. With my day job working for a company producing Internet-related products I got by, but it rankled that I and my fellow RISC OS devotees had to put up with slower speeds, and even had to be connected to an ancient network hub as the new higher speed switches wouldn't play nice with our old network cards. While we're waiting for the release of newer and faster machines the likelihood of faster hardware being produced for our existing machines, and at a price that didn't make upgrading prohibitive, just didn't seem feasible.

Then something strange happened Ñ not one but two 100bT cards were announced. The first was the Castle podule which sprang from the research into the Neuron embedded computers, and a NIC from an alliance of companies headed by Simtec. Although the Castle card was brought to market first, the subject of this review will be the Simtec offering which I received as a pre-release prototype; hopefully the Castle review will follow next month once I've managed to get to grips with it.

Simtec also produce an ISA version of their card for use in RiscStation computers, but it's the Risc PC I'll be concentrating on here. The main review machine was a Risc PC 700 upgraded with RISC OS 4.02 and a 200MHz StrongARM processor which I use at work, with a backup machine of the Risc PC 600 still with the original RISC OS 3.5 and ARM 6 that I have at home. The speed of the processor can affect the speed of traffic thoughput a little, so users with faster StrongARMs than mine may see a little improvement over my experiences, but probably not by a huge margin.

10/100 cards under RISC OS

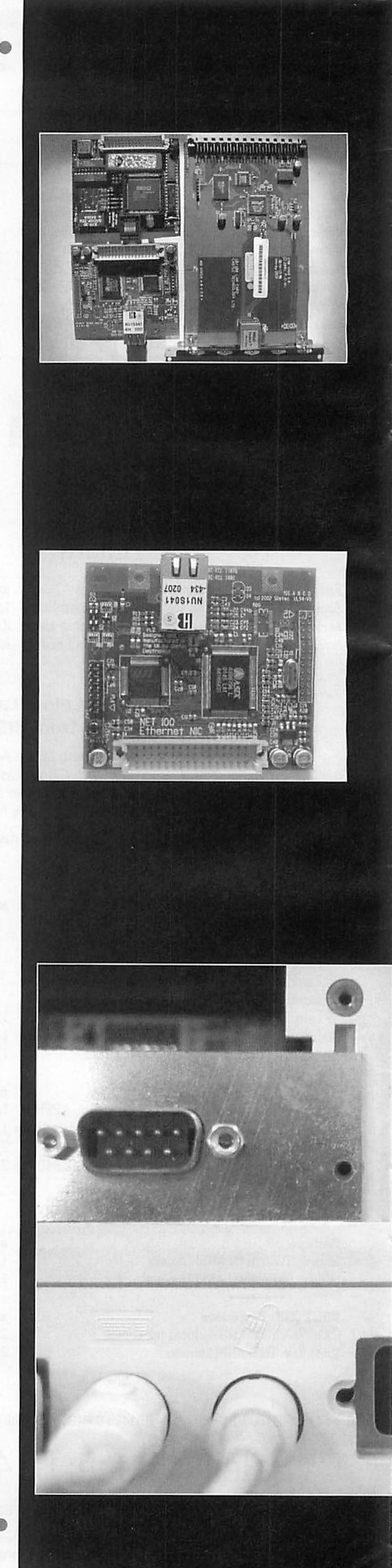
Talking about speed, with any new network card under RISC OS there is going to be a restriction affecting the speed of networking and that's the host computer itself. A 100bT network link should theoretically be able to transfer roughly 10Mbs a second running at full speed, but there are a number of factors which make this an impossible dream on the Risc PC.

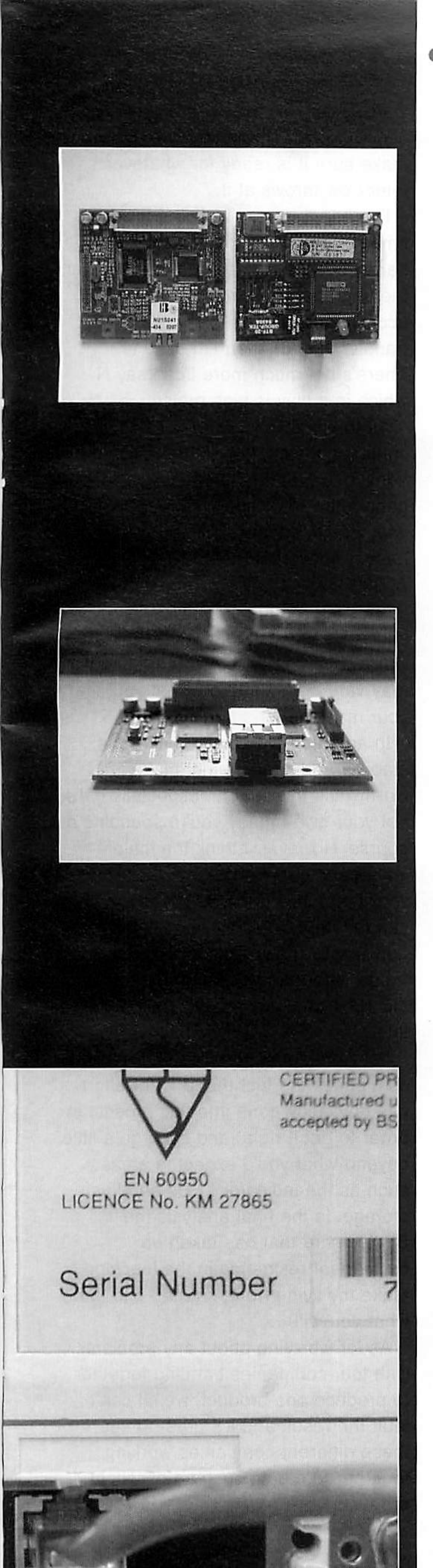
The interface connecting the network card, the speed of the processor, the speed at which the standard IDE hard drive interface can transfer data and even RISC OS itself can all have an impact to a greater or lesser extent, giving a theoretical maximum throughput of nearer 3.5MB/sec, and in tests an actual throughput of around 2MB/sec.

Unix derivatives on the same hardware do seem to give greater throughput, so perhaps now the hardware is here we'll see a few more tweaks here and there to things like the Internet stack to improve the situation. While this does sound disappointing at first, it's still a huge improvement on 10bT cards which should transfer at 1MB/sec, and seem to give nearer half that when put to the test.

It is also hugely dependent on what you want to do with your network connection as to how much of an improvement you will see. In my line of work as Web designer and sometime programmer I use a variety of networking software, such as Web browsers, FTP clients, Samba networked drives and so on, so my first instinct was to try transferring a few files around.

Again I was initially a little disappointed; using my favourite FTP client (the otherwise excellent FTPc) to transfer a large file from a Linux server on the internal office network gave only a 600KB/sec transfer rate even after I'd tweaked the settings to favour speed over desktop responsiveness; using a





Web browser was worse, with only about 300KB/sec forthcoming.

Neither speed would have greatly troubled my old ANT 10bT NIC, but then I guess it's a bit chicken and egg Ñ if the computer hasn't until now been capable of transferring data any faster, there's no incentive to write software that squeezes the last drop of speed out of the network connection; optimising the network stack would similarly have seemed a waste of effort without being able to see any improvement at the time.

It's also worth noting that when downloading files from the Internet rather than the internal network for most people this will be at substantially slower speeds anyway: even moving beyond the dial-up connection, I'm always amused when I max out my ADSL line using just an Archimedes A310 and ArcWeb, and that connection is twice the speed of the leased line into the office.

Before you think that the new cards are a waste of time there's one area that already shows a huge improvement, and that is sharing files using a networked filing system such as Samba. Although I still do a majority of my work on the Risc PC Ñ programming and HTML using StrongEd, graphics using ArtWorks and Photodesk, plus a few choice items I've lashed together in BASIC and Perl Ñ the end product usually has to be installed on a Linux machine and the bulk of the testing will be carried out on a Windows PC using Internet Explorer, Netscape (/Mozilla), Opera and so on.

Using OmniClient and LanMan98 for outgoing connections, and the freeware Samba server for incoming connections, I've got by; small files could be copied with a fair amount of ease, and large files were possible although they tended to make the Risc PC completely unusable until the transfer was complete. If you've just converted an album into MP3 format and started moving it on to your Risc PC you can usually forget about doing anything else for some time.

Since fitting one of the cards permanently to my machine this is a thing of the past. Not only do the files copy across much faster, the machine is responsive while the transfer is taking place. Sadly this means no more wandering off drinking coffee while making backups or copying over those large scans, movie clips or music files, but that's a small price to pay.

Editing a Web site project directly on a Linux machine is to all intents and purposes like editing it on the Risc PC's own hard drive: my previous modus operandi was to do large chunks of work on my Risc PC, upload it to the server, test it on a Windows machine, go back to the Risc PC to make changes, rinse, repeat; it came as somewhat of a shock recently to realise I'd completed a whole project saving all the code and images, including the rough files in ArtWorks and Sprite format, all on the server without even a backup on the Risc PC. Luckily it was just as quick to make that backup.

I don't know if ShareFS will be affected by this speed increase, because I didn't get chance to test two 100bT machines connected together to try it. It seems unlikely, but then again I recently built another StrongARM Risc PC from spare parts to act as a file server, and wanted to make a compete backup of my work machine. Fitting it with my old 10bT NIC I started the transfer and it looked like the machine had hung Ñ it hadn't, but it was receiving data at its absolute limit while the 100bT machine was hardly troubled. It certainly seemed to make a bigger impression than when both machines are using 10bT cards.

The Simtec NIC itself

The Simtec Net100 card is a collaboration between a number of well known names in the RISC OS market Ñ hardware guru Stuart Tyrrell; gaming and networking developers R-Comp; CTA Direct, RISC OS dealers and the people behind RiscStation; and of course Simtec themselves who produce a wide range of other RISC OS upgrades. Such a degree of collaboration seems unusual, so I was curious to see how this would turn out Ñ would the card draw from all the strengths of its creators, or would we see the problems associated with design by committee?

The NIC arrived with little in the way

of extras Ñ the instructions had been e-mailed to me in advance, so there was just a box containing the card itself, which being a pre-release prototype was lacking the metal plate to tidy up the back that shows through the NIC slot on the Risc PC. This plate is apparently required to comply with EC regulations so I had no doubt that it would make it into the finished item, and I've been told by purchasers of the final product that it is made of a good, solid piece of metal.

Otherwise the card appeared to be of good build quality, although given that it only has two main chips on the board compared to the six crammed onto my old 10bT card it wasn't exactly going to be messy. The RJ45 socket itself has three indicator lights so you can immediately diagnose problems. Although some might say that they're not strictly necessary they do help figure out why things are going wrong Ñ is it configuration, user error, software, hardware, broken wire, cleaning lady with a vacuum cleaner? Ñ so the use of a good quality socket with inline indicators is a nice touch.

There was also no driver disc in the package I recieved, which being a non-instruction reading kind of guy gave me pause for a while until I actually plugged the card in and found that the files necessary to upgrade my !Boot directory sitting there waiting for me in the Apps folder in the Resources filing system.

After copying these over the cards EtherX drivers could be configured in the normal way, and after rebooting my machine (and connecting the network cable to a faster hub) I was up and running. I think it's a great idea to have the software stored on the card itself; no broken floppies, no worries if you still don't have a CD ROM drive, the card is ready to rock and if you need to re-install the software at a later date you know exactly where to find it without hunting through that drawer of identical-looking discs. You can even stop the software showing up in the Apps folder for neatness too.

One really handy feature of the Simtec card is the flash upgrade application, amusingly called SNAFU (Simtec Non-specific Advanced Flash Utility). This is the same program used with some other Simtec products such as their IDE interface and a Flash storage card for RiscStation machines, so despite the name it seems quite well developed and stable.

This is intended to upgrade the software needed for the card to work, and this being a pre-release card there were a couple of upgrades that I managed to carry out without incident as last minute changes were made to improve performance and add BootP support. What might not seem so obvious is that you can add arbitrary modules of your own.

For instance on the older of the two Risc PCs I found that the Voyager Internet suite had unplugged various Internet modules so that it could safely softload newer ones later on, and the card wouldn't start up properly as it needs the MBufManager module to run a self-check. No problem, just store the latest Internet modules on the card itself. I should point out that if you're running RISC OS 4 or Select, or don't use Voyager or the ANT Suite, it's not an issue anyway; it has been suggested that you might want to use up that extra storage with commonly used modules, especially on discless machines, although the RiscStation version apparently goes one better and even runs these modules in place without taking up RAM on the computer when they're loaded.

Conclusions

I always think the best hardware upgrades are the ones you hardly notice Ñ once you get used to the extra speed or whatever, with luck you'll forget all about your new kit because the alternative is that it is causing you problems. I've already mentioned that all the other Acorn machines in the office have to be on a separate 10bT hub because they wouldn't play nice on the switch with all the other computers Ñ this card works fine.

My old card used to stop working when heat or movement would cause one of the chips to pop out of its socket Ñ this card has two small chips soldered firmly onto the board. I've had to change cards in the past when they turned out to be incompatible with processor or OS upgrades Ñ this card is designed for today's machines and comes with flash upgrade software to make sure it is ready for whatever tomorrow throws at it.

I've had this card installed for some time now on my work machine and I've hardly been given reason to remember the upgrade apart from being occasionally surprised by better file transfer speeds than I'm used to. There's not much more I can say Ñ which in a way is high praise.

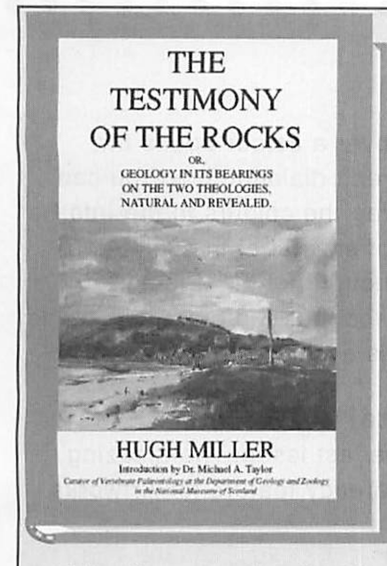
As to whether you'll be as impressed, well, I doubt that any network card attached to the current generation of computers will astound you with its speed, so if you already have a network card in your Risc PC or A7000 I would have thought that there's not a huge incentive to rush out and upgrade Ñ speedwise it's been worthwhile for me, but your mileage may vary depending on what you use your machine for.

In an office-type environment the stability and speed might make it a worthwhile investment, especially if it's not your own money you're spending of course. However, I think the major advantage comes when you're buying your first network card Ñ as far as I can tell the Simtec NIC is the cheapest network card available for the Acorn range, although I expect the price of old 10bT stock to devalue in light of this.

I say cheapest, but the relatively low cost belies the fact that a lot of effort has obviously gone into this product in order to get it right, and even go a little beyond what you'd expect in areas such as the indicator LEDs and flash storage. In the final analysis the Simtec card that has taken up permanent residence in the machine I make my living from, so read into that what you will.

As for worrying about any problems with four companies banding together to produce one product, well, I can't fault the result and it's great to see these different companies working together to create such an excellent product.

Richard Goodwin
richard@goodwin.uk.com

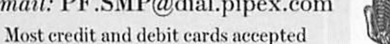


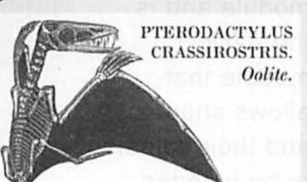
From start to finish this book was recreated on an Acorn RiscPC with a Kinetic card.

The massive task of retyping 400 pages of the text was achieved at breakneck speed by *!Sleuth3* (typing at over 2000 words a minute) with an A3 scanner using Pilling's *!Twain* software. Similarly the 152 engravings in the original book were carefully reproduced and the whole book, including the colour cover boards compiled using *Ovation Pro*. The resulting files were printed as Postscript and converted to PDF files via Cerilica's *!RiScript* and dispatched on a CD to printers in Belarus! There were no glitches at all and the result is a high quality stitch-bound volume which will last a lifetime.

Miller's 200th anniversary is taking place in 2002 and the National Trust for Scotland is planning significant events to bring Miller's work in geology and as evangelical free churchman to the attention of the modern generation. This book contributes to that endeavour.

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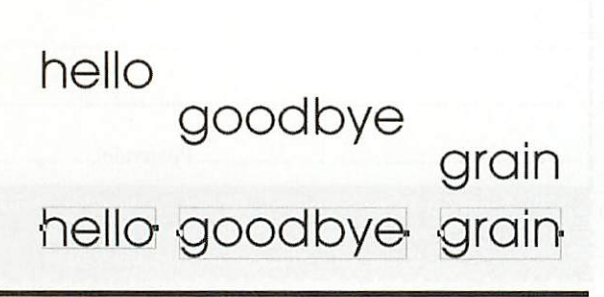
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The New Review

Thirty-five separate modules now adorn the incredible program that is the MasterWorks edition of ArtWorks. Some of them are original versions though often with bug fixes. In addition there are innumerable bug fixes which handle most the major and many minor bugs in the system.

In this review we shall just go through every single one of them and describe what they do, with pictures as appropriate. So sit back and enjoy the ride.



AlignPlus

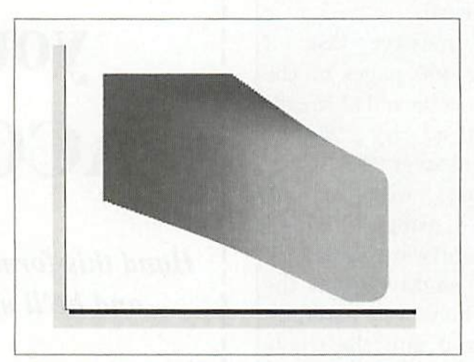
Artworks has quite extensive align options, but only the objects bounding box is considered. This is a particular problem when it comes to text because the size of the bounding box depends on whether the text also includes ascenders and descenders. The same problem crops up when aligning to the grid.

This module allows you to perform alignment operations on text objects but with respect to the baseline of the text only, ignoring ascenders and descenders (or lack of them).

AutoSave

Applies the auto-save facility to files, giving saving with or without a prompt at regular, definable intervals.

AWFixMod



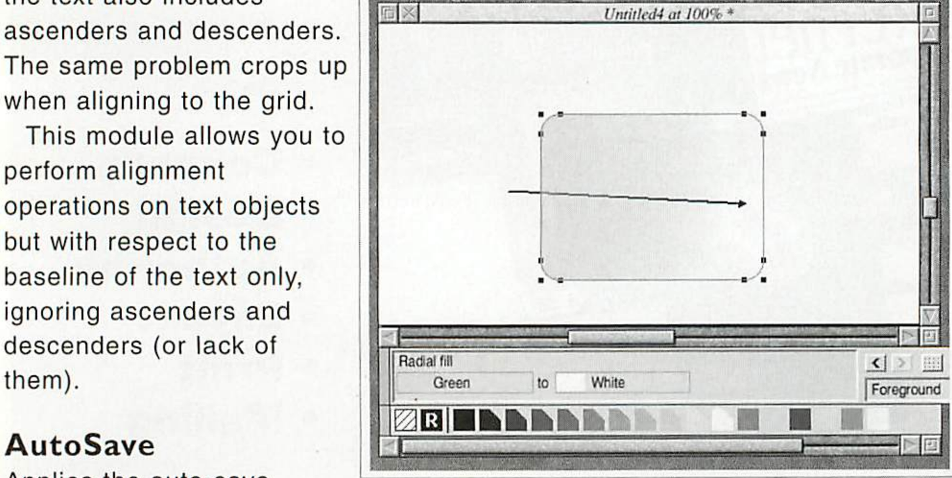
This is purely a bugfix module, it fixes problems with the heart of Artworks and improves the speed of rendering a blank page when used with the Viewfinder module.

Blend

This is a completely unmodifed module and is the basic module that allows shapes and their colours to be blended.

ColourBar

This creates a bar along the bottom of the Artworks window by default. In it is shown all the defined colours. You can drag a colour from the bar and drop it on to an object to alter that object's colour. Alternatively just



clickon the colour when an object is selected causes the colour to change.

Using the Select mouse button changes the fill colour while Adjust changes the line colour. Clicking menu over a colour opens the colour edit dialogue box. You can also drag the colours to the Info Bar fields of several of the colouring tools though not all of them.

This tool has the great advantage that it is available at all times

Crystal

See the last issue. The amazing transparency feature for Artworks.

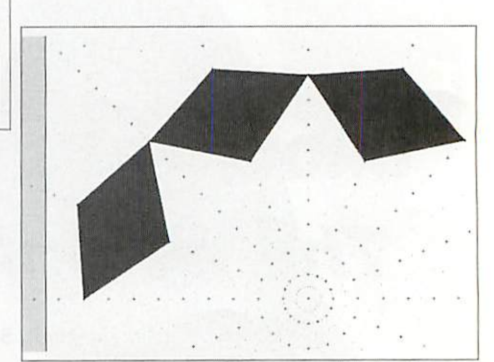
Filter

This tool gives you a way of altering the currently selected objects to isolate ones with specific attributes — all the blue objects, *all circles*, all with a certain fill style, line colour, font size and so on. Having done that you can then implement a change to all those objects.

Grids

Draw always had an advantage over Artworks in that it had an isometric grid as well as the usual rectangular grid. The Grids module fixes that by giving Artworks both an isometric grid and a circular grid. This grid is in addition to the standard grid options but work in a similar way.

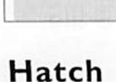
You can have a lot of fun playing with circular grids.



Group
This is a slightly updated version of the original module and simply provides a little more functionality to work with the Crystal module.

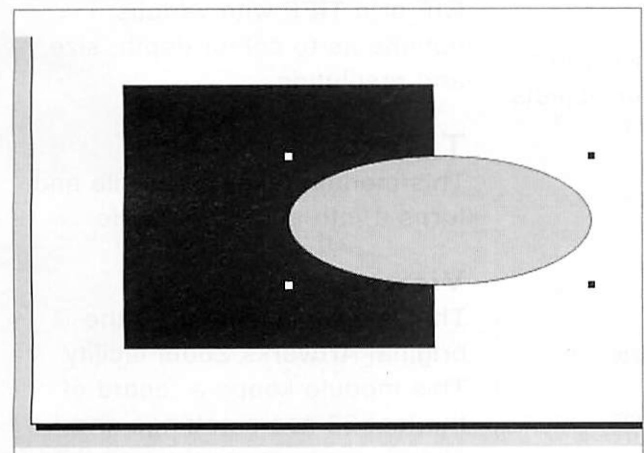
Hatch
The reason for this module was to cope with the situation where you need to shade an object that's going to be displayed in black and white. Although ultimately it became far more than that.

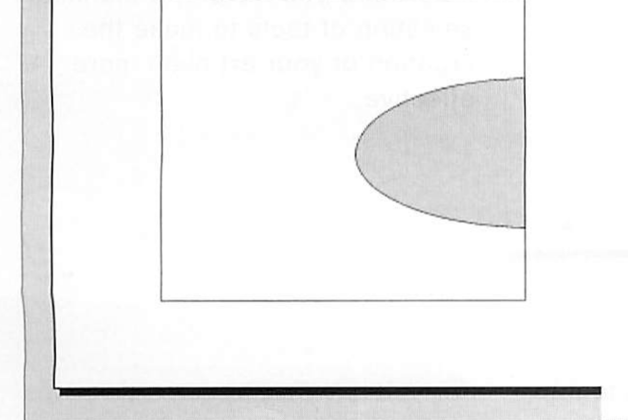
It allows you to fill an object with a hatch pattern though you can also alter its colours easily.

Intersect


This is an unusual module, one of the ones that if you need it you really need it and if not it will sit around doing nothing for years. Essentially it allows you to create a shape which consists only of the overlapping parts of two or more shapes.

In the examples shown we have kept an outline of the original rectangle just to show where it used to be.



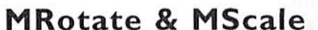


JPEGObj
This modules simply allows you to embed JPEGs in Artworks files without having to convert them to Sprites. You can manipulate them as you would a sprite including rotating and skewing them.

LdSvNativ


The original module for loading and saving in Artworks format.

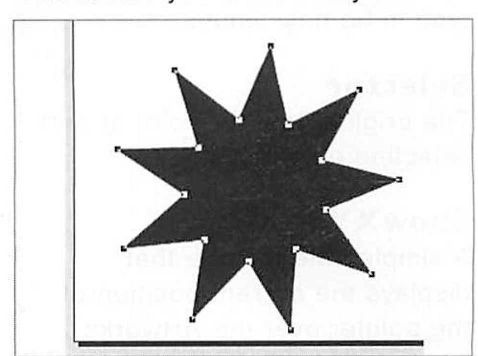
Moulder
The original module for performing envelope and perspective manipulations to objects.

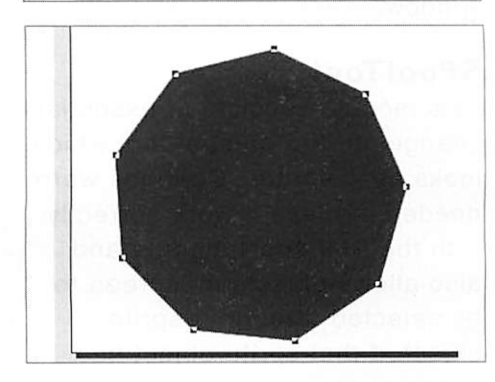


MRotate & MScale
MRotate allows groups of objects to be rotated around their own individual centre points, rather than the single centrepoint of the entire group. MScale does the same thing but for scaling instead.

PathTool
This is an improved and bug-fixed version of the original module which provides various path operations for different modules.

PathUtils
This allows you to manually edit the



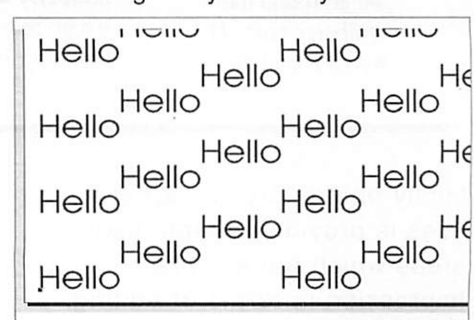


values of a segment of a line.

Polygon
The Polygon module is a simple addition which gives you extensive options, basically you can create a polygon with 3 or more sides, and change it as you go. In addition you can have the "stellated" option which turns it into a star. Brilliant.

QuickCopy
With an object or group selected use this tool and just click — a copy is created where you click.

Replicate
This tool gives you a way of



duplicating an object multiple times without using any extra memory it can create various patterns.

Resizer
Allows you to alter an object's position and size manually, just type in he new values.

Selector
The original tool for point at and selecting objects.

ShowXY
A simple little module that displays the current position of the pointer over the Artworks window.

SPoolTool
This module consists of essential changes to the original tool which looks after sprites. Changes were needed to make it work correctly with the BMExport module and also allows objects on screen to be selected through a sprite object, if that sprite object has transparency.

TextArea
This was the most significant addition to the Artworks module family before Crystal. What it does is provide editable text areas which behave like Impression in terms of editing.

Here we go round

Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush. Here we go round the mulberry bush.

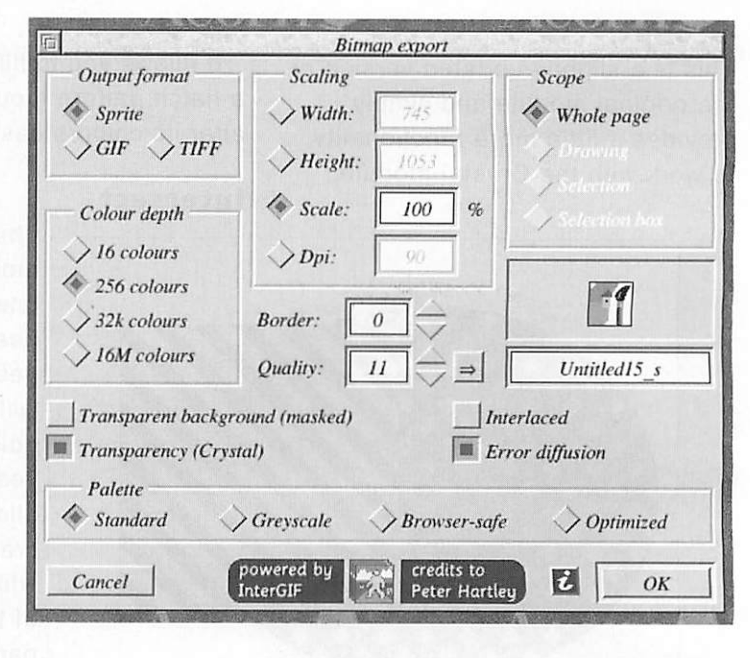
You create a text area and can then type in text, this can have different font styles, be multi-column, text can be selected, copied and pasted and so on. It is a complete text editing system for Artworks that makes an invaluable addition to the tool.

TextTool
Same as the original text editing tool with a few bug fixes.

Transform
The original rotation and scaling tool.

Translate
A simple tool which allows you to move a selected object or objects by a defined value.

T_Draw
A bug-fixed version of the tool to export Artworks as a drawfile.



T_EPS
A bug-fixed version of the tool to export Artworks as an EPS file.

T_Spr
This is the BMExport tool which allows you to save an Artworks file as a bit-map file: A sprite, a GIF or a TIFF with various options as to colour depth, size and resolution.

T_Text
This module takes a text file and turns it into an Artworks file.

Viewer
This is a replacement for the original Artworks Zoom facility. This module keeps a record of the last 32 zoom settings and allows you to move through them. It also works independently for each window.

So there you have it, a stunning selection of tools to make the creation of your art even more effective.

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WIN!

This is your chance to win one of three copies of Schema 2

The fantastic programmable spreadsheet from Clares Micro Supplies plus the Excel translation software.

All you have to do is answer the question below and send your answer on a postcard to Tau Press Ltd at the usual address.

So here's your question:

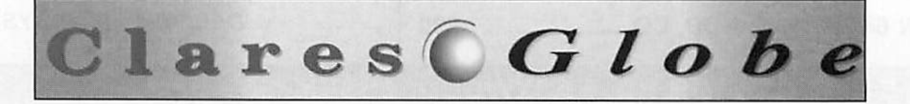
Which function would you typically use in a spreadsheet in order to add up all the values in a row or a column?

(a) LN()

(b) FLOOR()

(c) SUM()

The closing date for this competition is Aug 31st 2002 so get your entries in as fast as possible for your chance to win one of these great prizes.



Steam-driven CD

When this CD-Rom first arrived I have to admit I read the title on the cover and wrinkled my nose up a bit – managing to stifle the words 'What sort of anorak do you take me for?' But Steve insisted that it would be fine so I just smiled, put the software in my bag and set off for home.

Something to bear in mind here is that this CD is written for a PC but, as with other NVM CDs, they are HTML based and can be run on RISC OS with, at least, Win95FS. At least one enthusiastic RISC OS user has been in touch with NVM and is working with them to ensure future CDs don't have the (few) problems that the older ones do.

Quite simply, this CD is a very large, offline Web site which you view through your normal Web browser. It provides a 'virtual' tour of the entire Settle-Carlisle railway and the countryside surrounding this well-known line. Using the location map to choose a stop on the line you can take yourself to pages dedicated to that stop and by clicking on the links you find there you can explore the area and visit some of the sights which can be found nearby.

Written in friendly manner, the text is always interesting to read and there are occasions when the writer's sense of humour shows through. For example, I came across this when exploring Alum Pot which is the most complex and spectacular cave system in the area and is located just a short walk from Selside.

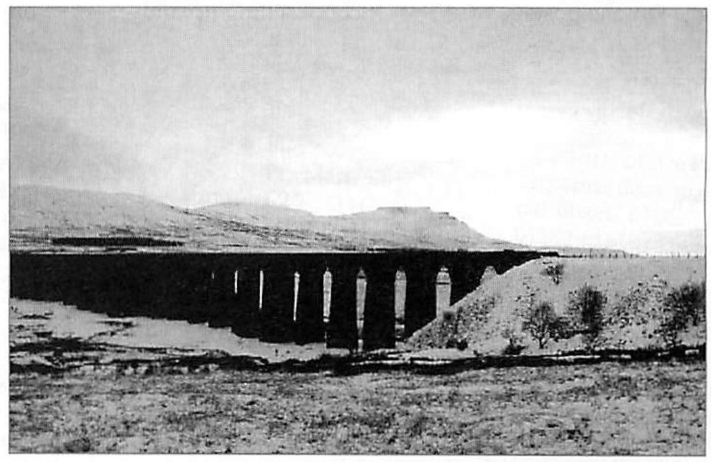
"The main shaft is best viewed FROM A RESPECTFUL DISTANCE, as illustrated by the accompanying photograph. Keep children and animals bound and gagged!"

There are over 1500 stunning photographs, including seven panoramas, of one of the most beautiful areas of the country. I was amazed at just how many wonderful sights there are along and around the route of this famous old railway line. Together with these colourful pictures the CD provides you with hours of entertaining reading. Don't expect loads of fancy graphics though. There are, in all, nearly 700 pages of illustrated text on the disk. The entire history of the railway line is there. I particularly liked the History As News section which contains a number of reports from the local newspapers in the area dating from 1870 to 1896. It's amazing how much the way incidents are reported have changed since those days. You just don't see reports in newspapers nowadays which contain phrases such as "receiving such injuries as are feared will prove fatal."

Other sections of interest include a brief illustrated history of Carlisle and Scotland from the days when the Romans ruled the world through to 1745 and there is a page which explains the roots of place names in the area. There is a large selection of fact sheets about the stations, tunnels, signal boxes and viaducts located along the route. Plenty of stuff for you to all laid out in a neatly arranged format. I have to admit to being a bit of a history and geography buff, so I found myself really getting involved while browsing through the disk.

You can discover just how much you have learnt from reading this CD by taking part in the quiz. The idea is to travel from Settle to Carlisle calling at nine stations along the way. To get to the next station you need to choose the correct answer to a question from a choice of four. If you get one wrong you are penalised by being taken back one station.

I have also had the opportunity to take a quick look at 'A Langdales Photo Tour' which is another similar product from nvmdigital.com. There is a lot of information contained on



these disks but my only real worry is that their subject matter is only going to have a limited appeal. I can only see people who enjoy hiking holidays or railway buffs spending a lot of time looking at these.

Rob Donaldson
robdonaldson@acornuser.com

• RISC PC 700, S/A, RISC OS4, 89b HD, 48x CD, Midi, SCSI, 19" monitor, 36Mb RAM, Loads S/W, Inc: Easiwriter, Ovation Pro, Sibelius 7, Intersuite. richard.benjafield@ntlworld.com 07968985178 £400

• One BBC Master 128 with Z80 Torch pack (CP/M) fitted and twin Z80 disk drives. Second BBC Master 128 with internal 6502 2nd processor fitted with twin Cumana 40/80 drives. Offers please 01702 585358 or e-mail: jar89@btinternet.com

• Acorn Risc PC (upgraded), PLUS strongarm,Windows 2000, scanner, colour printer (Epson), Pro-artisan art, Impression word process. Dorset. £500. E-mail: Sueedwards01@yahoo.co.uk

• For sale: A4000S (A4000 in Semerc case), 2Mb Ram, 400 Meg harddisk, Serial mouse, A5000 keyboard, Userport podule (HCCS Multipodule), RISC OS 3.11. Sensible offers. Can supply VGA monitor for extra 30 pounds. Tel: Bristol (0117) 9425082.

• Anyone want an original unused 486 PC Card (ACA 42) for Risc PC with DOS Software all boxed, manuals etc. Pay the postage or collect from SE London. Tel: 020 7703 5158 or des.dept@btinternet.com

• Wanted: 100MB Zip drive, external parallel port type, also Argo drivers. Will pay £50 and collect within 50 miles of Bracknell. Richard 07956 624412 richarda.green@invensys.com

• For sale: (a) Acorn 1 A7000+ with inkjet printer. (2) Acorn 2 A3020 with scsi MEU inc cd rom drive. Both have monitors are in working order and are ex school systems. Offers please, purchaser must collect Stalybridge, Cheshire, England. E-mail acorns@rastin.com or text 0777 934 1383 I will reply to the best offers

• RISC OS 3 PRM's and other Acorn programming books. Free to pick up or 20 GBP. tel: Cheltenham (01242) 244227 - Chris. Also Acorn user mags issues around ?80-130? free to pick up only.

• For sale: Acorn pocket book 2, with A-link, manuals, etc. £50. Tel 01424 846213

• A7000+, RISC OS 3.71, 1.2 Gig Disc. CD,Monitor, Keyboard etc, Risc PC 600, RISC OS 3.5, 17 Meg Disc, CD,Monitor, Keyboard etc School selling up and converting to the dreaded Microsoft PC. Also a range of other Acorns A5000, 40000. No reasonable offer refused. South Birmingham area. Contact Mike on Mike.baggotthoc@talk21.com.

• OAP needs "OakDraw for Windows" to allow drawfile transfer to PC. As cheap as possible please. Reply to: john@hamiltonj51.freeserve.co.uk

• Little used, VERY well treated Printer and Video Interface Podule cw manuals, leads etc. 600dpi output. Works with everything from an Archimedes A340 to current RiscPC SA. (V4.0). Not being given the workload it is clearly capable of. A solid workhorse. Nearly new toner. Offers please to h.boyd@argonet.co.uk Buyer pays carriage.

• Surplus CDROMs Medieval and Tudor Hampshire reviewed issue 213. 400 copies £2k or smaller quantities negotiable. Contact david.bond@Hants.gov.uk Winchester Hants 01962846154.

• Clan optima NLE video system software and hardware package, has been unused. Can be upgraded in future requries SA RPC offers around £900 enquiries to aokai@tiscali.co.uk Merseyside area. K. Andersen - Tel 0151-547 3993

• Kinetic RiscPC 233Mhz 17" Ilyama monitor 10Gb HD, 52xCDRom, internet ready (RComp Dial Up) and software VGC hardly used 18 months old, cost £1490.00, must sell, reasonable offer accepted. postage extra, email verseau@ukgateway.net or louis@raynal.freeserve.co.uk Tel 01706 812516

• I need a double/double side disc drive (maybe CUMANA for A BBC B with Acorn DFS. I also need a connection lead for or complete Micropulse external Rom box dolton.hussey@btopenworld.com

• For Sale: Acorn Risc PC600 with StrongARM processor, RISC OS 3.7, 486DX2/66 PC Card, 32mb Ram, 1Mb VRAM, 3Gb Hard drive, 40x CD Rom drive and Mozart 16 bit soundcard. Bundled with various software/games including SimCity 2000 and Acorn Doom. £425 or nearest offer. Email : db@davidbaxter.co.uk Telephone 01524 69212 (evening) or 0777 3461099.

• WANTED URGENTLY: Acorn A4 portable. 2Mb or 4Mb, Any sized hard drive. Must have battery pack, all

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Please fill in your name and telephone number below – these will not be published but enable us to contact you in case of any queries. Make sure you include your own town/county in your ad to help potential buyers with their purchasing decision.

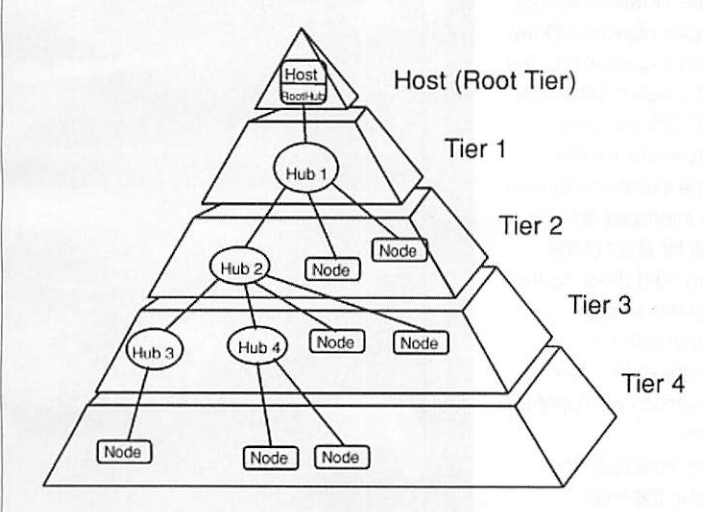
Your name:...Your phone number:..

Getting on the USB

This month we pass the USB baton over to Simtec to give you a run down on what this system is all about. The Universal Serial Bus (USB) is a low cost, medium performance bus system allowing up to 127 devices to be attached to each USB host controller. USB is operating system and computer hardware independent and was developed jointly by Compaq, Intel, Microsoft and NEC.

As its name says, USB is a serial bus. This means that data is transmitted one bit at a time in a stream over the bus. The USB bus consists of a cable carrying power and data from the host to the device. Because this "point-to-point" system only allows one device to be connected, a hub is used to handle *additional* devices.

Hubs are fitted in-between the computer's host port and a device to both buffer the signals and to replicate them onto one or more ports. The hub relays the upstream data to all ports at the same time to drive the additional devices. As the hub is also classed as a device, more than one hub can be used to expand the USB network as required.



In a USB system all bus activities are initiated and controlled by a single host controller. Besides defining the electrical and mechanical properties, the USB specification also defines the bus protocol and the behaviour of the system. As part of the USB standard, it provides a communication and configuration protocol between host applications and the devices they drive and strictly dictates their expected behaviour and interaction.

As part of this definition, there is an attempt to create specific classes of devices and define a common set of functions/interfaces for all similar devices within the class. This makes it much easier to write drivers to give hardware and operating system independence for accessing, running and controlling such devices.

For example, hubs are simply a special class of device used to expand the USB network. Their class properties describe how they set up routing of data transfer and how to detect if a device has been plugged in or removed from the bus. As part of this management function, they detect bus faults and usually provide power control so unused devices can be switched off — useful for saving power on a portable system. Because devices can be "hot plugged", the bus must also cope with power surges and over-current conditions if the user tries to attach too many devices or a device that requires too much power to a single USB segment.

The basic concept of transfer between an application on the host and a devices is done by using pipes. A device consists of several "endpoints" which allow a pipe to be connected to facilitate communication. Before communication can begin, a pipe is established between an application and one or more endpoints. Each pipe supports a unidirectional stream of data and either sends or receives depending on the properties of the connected endpoint. In this way, the endpoint automatically determines the direction of the data transfer. In some situations it is possible to bind both a sending and a receiving endpoint to one pipe to create a bi-directional pipe.

To support the flow of data between the host and the device, each pipe has an associated buffer where data is queued for later transmission or buffered when data is received. It is through these buffers that the device driver and application actually communicates with a device with the USB stack automatically controlling the data flow to and from them.

The range of USB devices is growing continuously, but most of them fall within a very small range of classes:

- mouse
- keyboard
- painting tablet
- joystick
- digital camera
- web camera
- digital TV receiver
- interface to ethernet
- modem (analogue, ISDN, DSL)
- external mass storage (e.g. Iomega drive)
- printer
- scanner
- pocketbook computer
- speakers

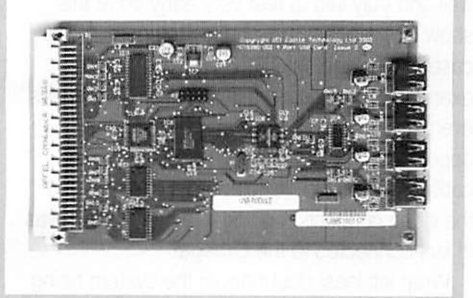
Although a pocket computer is listed above as a device, the USB specification allows for only one bus master or host on each USB. So it's not possible to connect two host computers together directly without some form of adaptor. These USB "bridges" usually take the form of two "back-to-back" devices which allow one host computer to leave messages for the other and visa-versa.

A peripheral may appear as more than one USB device with an integral hub connecting each internal device to the bus. Such multifunction products could be a fax machine which integrate a scanner to scan documents and a printer to print them out. The USB specification requires that such devices should are treated as two separate devices (a scanner and a printer device), and require two separate drivers to control them.

So there's a short rundown on USB, more next month.

Castle: **www.castle.uk.co/support/usb/**
Simtec: **www.riscos-usb.com**

Last issue we didn't have much space for pictures so missed out an excellent image of the Castle USB card so we're including it here.



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RISC OS Expo 2002

The RISC OS Expo 2002 took place in Nieuwegein, Utrecht, Holland, on Saturday 22nd June. As in previous years, the venue was the Hotel Mercure Utrecht, and the event was organised by Holland's "Big Ben Club".

Once again, I was surprised that I myself, and the few other people who came along in my car, were just about the only British RISC OS users I recognised at the show (apart from exhibitors!) I will say more later about how easy it is to reach the show from the U.K., and how it compares to what we consider our "local" U.K. shows...

Omega the first and last word

However, as with any other show, what I should mention first is what made the biggest impact at the show. This Dutch RISC OS event seemed to be the exact opposite of recent shows in mainland Britain. This time, MicroDigital were very visible as the only RISCOS Ltd hardware partner present; whereas at recent UK shows, visitors have often noticed MicroDigital for their absence, while the other two RISCOS Ltd hardware partners have usually been present.

It will come as little surprise that MicroDigital were by far the most popular attraction at the show. Although the MicroDigital Omega was first demonstrated at the Wakefield 2001 show, then it looked distinctly flaky at that event, and failed to appear at all at the Dutch RISC OS Expo a month afterwards – nor indeed at a number of other shows the same year. So the fully working Omega on the end of the Desk stand was quite amazing news to visitors from both sides of the Channel.

There has been a culture of uncertainty about the Omega, with some even going so far as to suggest that the prototype on display at Wakefield 2001 was a StrongARM Risc PC equipped with ViewFinder and shoehorned into a PC case. While MicroDigital view such comments with total contempt, the difference that seeing "the real thing" in action made to quite a few well known cynics was amazing to watch.

Questioning reality

Suspicions about the contents of the case were well and truly laid to rest very early on at this show. MicroDigital were happy to open up the case of the running machine and let people examine the insides in minute detail. There was even, for the real conspiracy theorists, the opportunity to examine and photograph the cabling behind the desk, in order to verify that the video connection going into the monitor was in fact connected to the Omega!

What left least doubt about the system being a totally different beast from any RISC OS computer yet seen, however, was the machine's effortless ease when running in extremely high resolution and colour depth modes.

The demonstration machine at the show was running a 1280x1024 screen mode in 16 million colours. This resolution was the maximum supported by the 18" LCD flat screen monitor in use. MicroDigital told us that on a larger monitor, the demonstration machine is able to manage 1800x1440 screen modes, still in 16 million colours.

This top end screen mode can apparently only be run at a refresh rate of 60Hz using the current system. This would provide a perfectly acceptable display with LCD flat screen monitors (which have greater phosphor persistence), but would be unacceptably low if using a traditional CRT monitor. Not many people can afford 22" LCD monitors at present!

The demonstration machine supported the use of up to 16MB of video memory without problems – a huge improvement over the 2MB of the Risc PC. The ViewFinder card for the Risc PC can provide comparable, and even greater, quantities of video memory, but it has the disadvantage of operating with the restrictions of the extremely slow Risc PC podule bus. The Omega is the first high-end RISC OS system to escape these restrictions.

Faster and faster

It was difficult to carry out conclusive speed tests on the Omega without a Risc PC side by side for comparison purposes. However, various tests were made using complex objects in Draw, using Artworks, and using other applications; the general impression was that it was substantially faster than any existing RISC OS computer.

Particularly noticeable was the faster disk access, an example being the loading sequence of Artworks. Even "fast" disk interfaces on existing Risc PC systems fall far short of the speeds possible with modern hard disks, so this is an area where the Omega has a huge advantage. It seemed fast even with the demonstration model using slower PIO disk access; the final production version will hopefully use much faster DMA access.

MicroDigital said that there would be other speed improvements as well in the final production machines. They will apparently use 133MHz SDRAM, as compared with 100MHz in the prototype version.

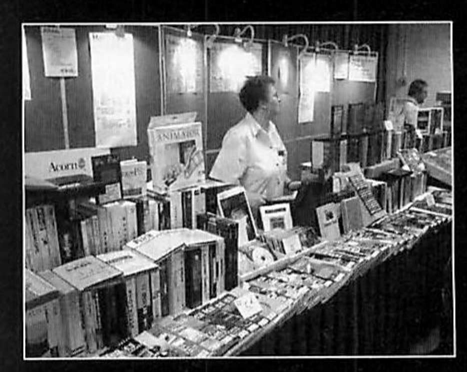
Although the StrongARM processor itself can only have a 64MHz data bus, additional bandwidth is very useful for the screen memory, which is taken from the main system memory, unlike current PC systems and add-ons like the ViewFinder. MicroDigital's technical guru, David Prosser, said that memory access could take 8 bytes at a time (64 bits) rather than 4 bytes at a time (32 bits). This will give significant advantages for video access, much as Millipede's Imago project planned to use 64-bit, 128-bit, or even 256-bit memory access for video.











On the disk front, the well-known IDEFS looks to be the filing system of choice for the Omega's IDE disks. However, SCSI cards of various sorts will also be available, so many users may head down the SCSI route for access to some of their essential peripherals.

When and where?

Unsurprisingly, a favourite question was precisely when production models of the Omega would be available to the ordinary public. MicroDigital took two different approaches to this question. David Atkins was unwilling to name any date, as the negative reaction to predicted release dates had been seen all too often in the past. However, David Prosser said he thought it possible that production machines might appear in small numbers by the beginning of September.

As has been seen with so many different RISC OS projects, promised dates often fall foul of unpredictable circumstances or unforeseen problems. So David Atkins' answer may well have been the wiser one. However, the progress on the machine certainly seemed to lend credence to his statement that the only real obstacle remaining is to get all the correct parts to the production line in sufficient numbers to get going.

No indication was given at the show of any immediate plans for a public demonstration of the Omega on the British mainland; however, just as we went to press, it was announced that David Atkins would visit the Wakefield RISC OS Computer Club – MicroDigital's closest user group – with an Omega on Wednesday 3rd July. There should certainly be some interesting feedback from that event.

Impossible to crash?

At the Wakefield 2001 show, the prototype Omega had seemed especially unreliable when running application software. So this time it was reassuring to see the latest version of Artworks – far from a small or simple application by RISC OS standards – running without problems. Not just productivity software was on show; the FQuake demo was also running happily, without any sign of crashing.

The assembled users did manage to get the Omega to crash at least once or twice, yet this was hardly surprising given the number of different people who got their paws on it to try out different things, including experimenting with the task display.

Not yet available on the machine demonstrated were sound support and USB drivers. The machine will use a PCI card for sound, and David Prosser of MicroDigital described the support for this as being "nearly there". Likewise, USB 1.1 support and drivers were planned to be in place on the final production machines.

I didn't obtain details of what sort of USB devices would have driver support initially; it will be interesting to see if MicroDigital work together with some of RISC OS companies already working on drivers for other systems, or if they will depend entirely on in-house development.

Since RiscStation had mentioned at the Wakefield Show the possibility that the RiscStation portable would ship with RISC OS Select, it was not surprising that MicroDigital were asked if the same might be true of the Omega. They responded that they knew nothing about RISC OS Select, and had no documentation for it, so it would certainly not be shipping with the Omega in the immediate future.

Instead, the final production machines are likely to use a version of RISC OS 4.03 that is almost identical to the standard version, apart from some changes to CDFS. This may prove something of a backward step to the hundreds of RISC OS users who are already well established with RISC OS Select, but time will tell.

Marketing a danger thing

I had a few concerns about the marketing of the Omega. David Atkins said at least twice that the Omega had effectively been finished for a year or so as far as he was concerned, and so the majority of his attention was focused upon the much wider





programme of development that is central to MicroDigital's business plan.

I've mentioned that the wider programme of development was explained in some detail in David's theatre presentation. However, I felt that if the most visible customer-facing individual in such a small company would be so focused on the future programme rather than on selling the most significant key product already in existence, there could be trouble ahead.

MicroDigital also sometimes seemed very defensive; the slightest mention of those who'd been sceptical about their products drew a rapid retort from David Atkins of, "Well I'm in business, if I paid attention to what everyone said then I'd never get anything done." This is a very valid point in some ways. But it perhaps ignores the importance of customer relations when marketing what could be the most important RISC OS product since the StrongARM upgrade, or even the original Risc PC itself.

It has to be admitted that MicroDigital's competitors in the world of producing RISC OS desktop computers don't always do a lot better with marketing. Indeed, the Omega isn't even available to end users, so far. So it may yet be a while before we see the entirety of David's approach to marketing and selling what seems certain to be the most desirable RISC OS computer of the decade.

Exhibitors from the UK

Even in the absence of Castle and RiscStation, companies from the United Kingdom were well represented. The Big Ben Club offer free stands to UK companies in order to encourage attendance, and once again this seemed to have a positive effect.

Paul Beverley had a stand promoting Archive and his new "Living with Technology" magazine – although he was closed at 1pm in order to make sure to catch MicroDigital's theatre presentation! The ARM Club were selling DiscKnight and various other goodies produced by the club, as well as recruiting new members of course. R-Comp were selling the new 100Mbit network cards and the Grapevine instant messaging software, and RISCOS Ltd were present with the latest version of RISC OS Select.

Surftec were also represented, with Neil Farnham-Smith focusing mainly on digital cameras. A Simtec USB card was in evidence on the Surftec stand, however Neil said that Surftec would be aiming to support both "standards" of USB card, Castle as well as Simtec.

As with Surftec's previous parallel port readers, the priority will be to support commonly used memory card formats. This means that the precise make of camera in use won't matter, so long as it uses a memory card format that is recognised. CompactFlash and Smartmedia are likely to be the first priority, thus covering the vast majority of digital cameras.

Not entirely unfamiliar faces

Most RISC OS users in the UK still imagine that the RISC OS Expo in Holland is dominated by UK exhibitors whom you might meet at RISC OS shows in Britain. However, this is very far indeed from reality.

By far the largest stand at the RISC OS Expo 2002, as at Expo 2001, was that of Desk – a name unusual to British visitors, but a very big name in Holland. Desk's stand wasn't quite as impressive this year as last (it lacked the 8 foot long pencil suspended from the ceiling, as well as the RiscStation exhibit), but it still seemed to contain as much variety as one might expect to find on about three or four different companies' stands at a British show.

Martin Wuerthner was, as always, the best dressed exhibitor, and this year managed to choose a waistcoat in exactly the same shade of purple as the plush cloths covering the tables. He also had a large glowing rock on his stand – I didn't ask why – and of course he was demonstrating and selling his greatly enhanced version of ArtWorks.

X-Ample technology had a substantial stand, including a Risc PC demonstrating Castle's USB card driving USB keyboards and mice. From Germany, Uffenkamp Computer Systems occupied an equally large and very well presented stand, with literally hundreds of RISC OS magazines, games, hardware add-ons and manuals for sale.

A change from last year's show was the absence of the "computer museum", which had included a huge variety of extremely rare hardware (both Acorn and otherwise), as well as some fascinating examples of manuals and press reports connected with many of the items on display. The local Dutch RISC OS user groups also seemed to have a rather smaller presence in terms of stand space. The A0 colour dye-sublimation printer did make an appearance, but was not operational this year.

Rather busy

It is almost always claimed by some that RISC OS shows are "just as busy as last year", but on this occasion it really did seem to be true. If anything, the show actually seemed rather busier than the previous year, at times.

Especially well attended were the theatre presentations (although admittedly there weren't actually that many of them). Unlike British users, who are always nervous of sitting at the front, visitors to the Dutch show really did fill up every single seat.

The theatre was, fortunately, a good size, with just over a dozen people having to stand when it was at its busiest.

The show entrance fee seemed rather on the expensive side compared with British shows which are often larger (there was no discount for Foundation members either), but it should be remembered that the Big Ben Club were providing quite a few stands for free, as well as siting the show in a quite central, accessible, and very pleasant venue.

The Hotel Mercure in Nieuwegein boasts easy parking, a large and comfortable lobby that usually seems mostly deserted (there is a temptation to think that one has arrived at the wrong place), and there is always a substantial self-service buffet opening directly off the show area. The latter did seem nearly as expensive as the snack bars at the RISC OS 2000 Epsom show, however! The show area itself was spacious and well presented.

A little excursion next year?

Paul Middleton mentioned in the Foundation newsletter how worthwhile the trip to Holland is... and that there are "many different ways" of getting there. This is certainly true, and indeed from some parts of the UK, the RISC OS Expo is in fact nearer than shows in certain other regions of the UK! So if you fancy joining in the fun next year, here are some ideas on how to do so.

For those in or near East Anglia, the Stena Discovery HSS from Harwich to the Hook of Holland is worth investigating. Stena are rightly proud of this unique ship; it's either the fastest large ferry in the world, the largest fast ferry in the world, or quite possibly both.

It has a casino, a moderately good restaurant and (separately) a selection of fast food offerings, two cinemas, a TV wall (occupied mostly by pop videos), some playhouse facilities for younger children, about six different bars, and a lot of other seating in different styles. Despite the crowds, there is never actually a lack of seats, so there is the chance to wander the ship choosing a seating, entertainment, and refreshment style that suits you. More importantly (and quite remarkably) despite its bulk it can manage close to sixty miles an hour, turning a seven or eight hour crossing into not much more than three hours.

Stena also run much slower overnight crossings, on which a small but tolerably well-presented private cabin complete with en suite bathroom is available for less than fifty pounds on top of the normal price of the crossing. These overnight boats do tend to be used mainly by truck drivers, so the food (all you can eat included in the price) tends to cater more towards their tastes, and there is only one bar. But again, you'll never struggle to find an empty table.

All the boats from Harwich can be reached via express trains from London's Liverpool Street station, taking not much more than an hour. I have heard tales of unpleasant ferry crossings due to the weather, however the RISC OS Expo takes place – wisely – in June, and on all four ferry crossings I've taken, the sea has been calm enough for the most nervous seafarer (although even the slightest bump from the waves can be a little unnerving if you're trying to get to sleep).

Similar overnight crossings are run from Hull and other UK ports. Whichever boat you take, you have the option of either taking your own vehicle and then driving it to the show at Utrecht (about fifty miles, mostly motorway), or travelling as a foot passenger and then taking the train – the latter is an approach we've not investigated in detail.

If you wish to fly, Amsterdam is the nearest main airport, and has good rail links to Utrecht.

For German readers, Utrecht is also very easy to reach by train. The very comfortable express train from Cologne to Amsterdam stops at Dusseldorf and Utrecht (at least), and comes highly recommended by a ROUGOL member and his wife who were in Germany on business at the time of last year's Expo, and found the time to visit the show.

If you want to travel all the way by train from the UK, your starting point is the Eurostar service from London Waterloo via the Channel Tunnel to Brussels. This is a rather circuitous route, however the train does move extremely quickly once it reaches the continental European section of its journey, and (you guessed) it has a nice bar. You'll need to take another train for the rest of the journey to Utrecht once you reach Brussels.

You can also drive a similar route from Kent via the Channel Tunnel into France, then Belgium, and finally Holland; this will total some hundreds of miles, however. Needless to say, road and rail travel to Utrecht is very easy from many other parts of France, Belgium, Germany, Holland and Denmark, but if you live there you are probably better able to work out the route than I am.

I hope to see some of you at the RISC OS Expo 2003.

Special thanks to John Tytgat, Ben Shimmin and Dave Ruck for their help with aspects of this report.

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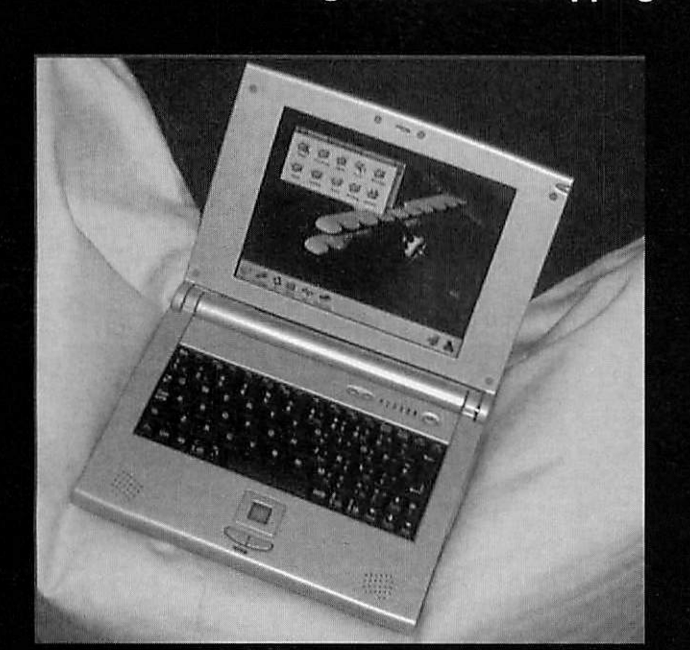
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Whose desktop?

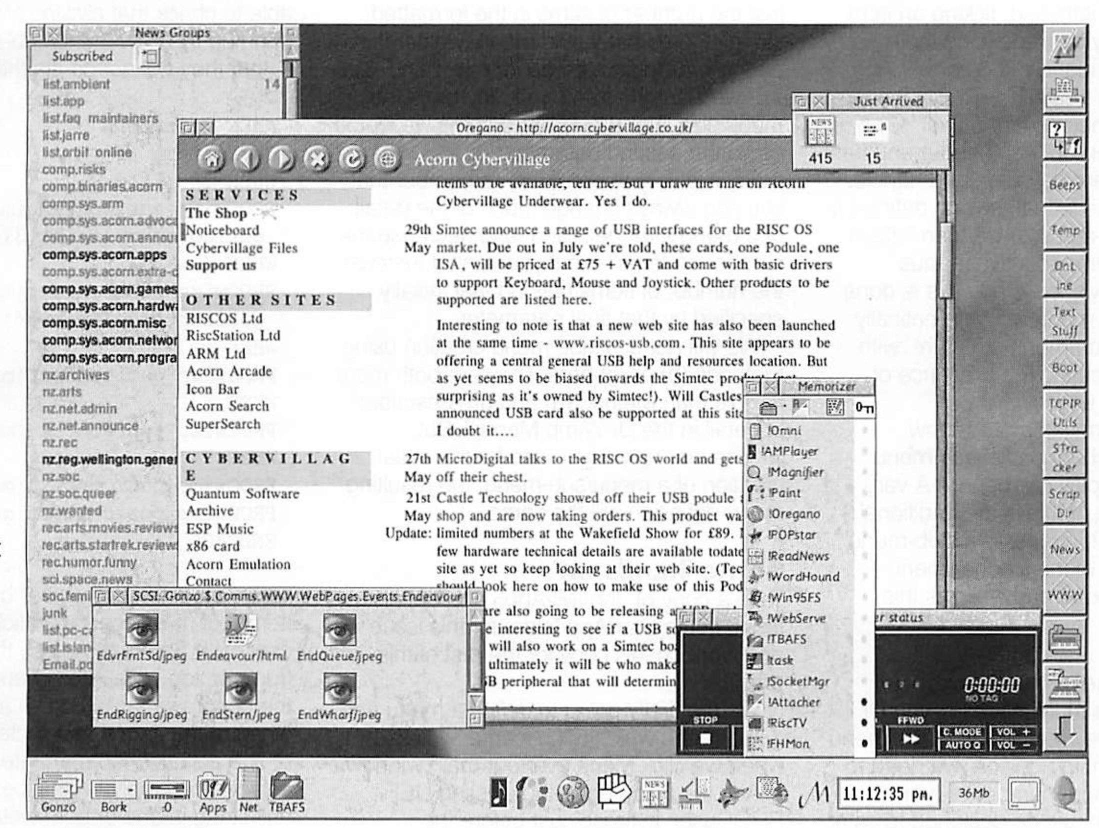
Before we commence with this month's mystery RISC OS user let's reveal the one from the previous article. None other than Mike Tomkinson, devout Yorkshireman regular writer with Acorn User for many years and yet other Acorn magazines before that.

Now another desktop, another puzzle. Whose could this be? Clearly whoever it is likes their e-mail and news as a copy of !ReadNews is running with a fresh steaming batch of e-mail and posts having arrived. Incorp is patiently signalling this with its "just arrived" window. Also Web browsing and editing seems to be a big thing for them as they have a Filer window open to the Web page they are tinkering with. Wordhound is always running providing a quick thesaurus and dictionary when the memory fails. Oregano provides their web browser. StrongEd rounds out affairs serving both as an excellent text editor and HTML editor.

They must like music too because AMPlayer is lurking here, not playing anything right now though. AppDock provides access to frequently used directories via keyboard shortcuts as well as initialising a few choice applications, like SparkFS. Omniclient is running hinting that this machine must be on an Ethernet with other machines, a quick check shows a few default mounts connecting to a local Windows-based PC for file sharing. Rounding out the supplements to the Filer is Memorizer which keeps a list of the last sixteen applications, directories or files used. Make a mistake and that file is but three clicks away no matter where on the hard drive it is.

Archived files are a big thing as not only is there SparkFS but TBAFS is always loaded and large numbers of applications are stored inside TBArchives. Because it is a block-based compression system this allows a reasonable level of compression while still having full read/write access to the files. Only files that infrequently get updated are stored like this as the archives do tend to fragment a bit and grow slowly.

Lurking unseen but always there is CoolSwitch giving Windows-like Alt+Tab and Control+Tab application and window-switching capabilities.



Clearly being able to quickly switch between RISC OS and Windows is useful requirement for this person. And Alarm is used in a variety of roles but mostly with various Task Alarms that automatically perform various tasks ranging from waking the person up in the morning (literally by causing the computer to scream at them using SysBeep to modify the default error beep noise), automatically posting various Usenet documents or to constantly changing the desktop backdrop during daylight hours every half hour or so.

Some of the other unseen software is in module form including the DataVox suite of modules for playing sound samples — used to provide startup/shutdown noises as well as the odd important infrequent alarm tone. NoError is loaded to ensure that error dialogs get cancelled within a few seconds, as the machine does get left unattended for long periods of time but still has automatic tasks to do.

Rummaging through their !Boot structure shows a custom !Boot application hidden away in the depths that has hangovers from older versions of RISC OS and indeed older Acorn machines. Clearly this person has been using Acorn machines for sometime. Indeed looking through their machine shows they have been programming the machines as well because a lot of small custom software, mostly system extension modules, lurk around along with their BASIC Assembler Source. StrongEd finds itself pressed into duty again as a BASIC editor.

So there you have it. Someone who spends a lot of time on the 'Net — creates Web pages and performs automatic 'Net-based actions? Someone who can program and has been in the market for many years? Read it all again carefully, the clues are there if you can but find them. Whose desktop could this be?

Part 4: Dr Wimp in practice

Continuing with the pattern established in the earlier articles, this article will start with !MyApp4 as we left it last time and develop it further. Also as before, we will start by copying and renaming !MyApp4 to become !MyApp5 and actually start with that — and the Acorn User Web site should have a copy of this all ready to go, in the folder StartApp.

This time we are going to look at Menus.

In the second article we actually created the very simple iconbar menu for our developing application, but we did not go into detail about it.

Using Dr Wimp, the management of menus is separated into two main steps. Firstly a menu is defined and stored — giving the menu a handle (the starting address of the definition) — and subsequently, the display of the menu is arranged as and when we wish.

Having defined a menu, its definition can be altered in many ways — both in detail (e.g. changing an item text, ticking an item etc.) or completely by re-defining the menu. The Dr Wimp Manual gives details.

Sub-menus are treated in exactly the same way as menus as far as their definition is concerned, each sub-menu has its own independent definition and handle. The only difference is that, having defined a menu and its sub-menu(s) we then 'attach' sub-menus to their respective menus according to our wishes. Once this is done the display of any menu will automatically incorporate any sub-menu structure, with 'arrow heads' indicating the presence of sub-menus in the usual way.

It is also worth noting that window handles are interchangeable with menu handles when displaying 'menus'. A very common example of this is the traditional 'Info' window which opens as a 'sub-menu' from the first item of the iconbar menu — and our application already follows this practice.

Defining a menu/sub-menu

Defining a menu simply means telling Dr Wimp what text we want to see in the menu title and each item. In addition, we need to specify the maximum number of menu items the menu should be designed to cater for — in case we want to increase the menu size beyond its initial size during the program run.

Dr Wimp then converts this information into the necessary menu definition and tells us the starting address of its storage location (the menu handle).

You can prepare the required menu text in one of three different ways:

(a) as a specially formatted string;
(b) putting the required text into an array;
(c) putting the required text into a Messages file.

Method (a) is the simplest and this is what we have already used to prepare the iconbar menu. Look at Line 290 of the !RunImage of our starting !MyApp5:

```
iconbarmenu%=FNwimp_createmenu("MyApp5/Info/Quit",0)
```

This single statement is all that is needed to define a two-item menu whose title is "MyApp5" and which has two items called "Info" and "Quit" respectively — "Info" will be Item 1 — the topmost item — and "Quit" will be Item 2 (also the bottom item in this simple case).

As you can see, the special string format is simply formed by separating the title text and each text item with a "/" character.

We could expand this to as many items as we wish, but the limiting factor is the maximum allowable length of a Basic statement line.

The second parameter of the above wimp-function tells Dr Wimp the maximum number of items this menu is allowed to have. The value of 0 has a special meaning: it says "Define the menu to have a maximum size sufficient to accommodate just the number of items in the formatted string". Here, that would mean two items will be the maximum allowed for this menu.

If we want the freedom to increase the menu size later up to, say, 6 items we would make the second parameter 6.

So, it is very important to remember that you can always change much of the detail of a menu after definition, and decrease the number of items — but you cannot increase the number of items beyond that initially specified by that final parameter.

We will not describe menu creation using Methods (b) or (c) here. They are both more flexible than Method (a) and are described in detail in the Dr Wimp Manual. But, whichever method you use for this initial creation of a menu/sub-menu, the resulting menu definition will the same.

Some 'hands on'

Take a copy of the !MyApp5 application found in the StartApp folder for this issue and work on this copy for the rest of this article.

We are firstly going to define a menu and a sub-menu which will become available when we click Menu over our main window.

Add the following to the existing DEF PROCuser_initialise, just before the ENDPROC:

```
menu$="Main menu/Top writable/Bottom writable/Copy top to bottom/Copy bottom to top/Clear top/Clear bottom/Clear both"
mainmenu%=FNwimp_createmenu(menu$,0)
menu$="Bottom Writable/Enable/Disable"
submenu%=FNwimp_createmenu(menu$,0)
PROCwimp_attachsubmenu(mainmenu%,1,submenu%)
PROCwimp_attachsubmenu(mainmenu%,2,submenu%)
```

These lines should be easily understood from our earlier explanation. The only point which may be a little confusing is that we have attached the same sub-menu to both the first and second items of our new mainmenu%. There is nothing wrong with this from a sheer programming viewpoint, but our eventual user might be a bit confused if we left things like that. But we will be changing things shortly and all will become clear.

Now go to DEF PROCuser_menu() and change it to:

```
DEF FNuser_menu(window%,icon%)
return%=0
REM** Designate iconbar and main menu. **
CASE window% OF
WHEN iconbar%
return%=iconbarmenu%
WHEN main%
return%=mainmenu%
ENDCASE
=return%
```

If you now save and run the application and open the main window, you should be able to check that clicking Menu over it will bring up the new menu/sub-menus correctly — but they will not do anything yet.

```
WHEN mainmenu%
CASE item% OF
WHEN 3
PROCwimp_puticontext(main%,6,FNwimp_geticontext (main%,3))
WHEN 4
PROCwimp_puticontext(main%,3,FNwimp_geticontext (main%,6))
WHEN 5
PROCwimp_puticontext(main%,3,"")
WHEN 6
PROCwimp_puticontext(main%,6,"")
WHEN 7
PROCwimp_puticontext(main%,3,"")
PROCwimp_puticontext(main%,6,"")
ENDCASE
```

This should be pretty clear by now: when Item 3 of mainmenu% is clicked on by the user, with Select or Adjust, the text is read from the top writable icon and written into the bottom writable icon — and vice versa when menu Item 4 is selected.

The action when menu Item 5, 6 or 7 is selected is simply to replace the text by a null string in one or both writable icons — 'deleting' any existing text.

Again, save the !RunImage, and try out these menu items after typing some text into one of the writable icons.

Now that we have reached this stage it will make sense to undo something we introduced in the previous article. Go to DEF PROCuser_mouseclick() and look at the WHEN 4 and WHEN 7 parts of the WHEN main% construct. Put a REM in front of

`PROCwimp_puticontext(window%,3,"")` and `PROCwimp_puticontext(window%,6,"")`.

This will stop text being deleted when you click on the radio icons — our new menu

structure supersedes that need.

We are now going to move on to another powerful Dr Wimp facility — this one is:

```
DEF PROCuser_overmenuarrow(RETURN
nextsubmenu%,
parentmenuitem%,x%,y%)
```

Every time you move the mouse pointer over one of those small arrowheads on a menu/sub-menu, Dr Wimp automatically calls this user-function with the parameters carrying the 'live' values. Thus you are told the handle of the just-about-to-be-opened sub-menu, what menu/sub-menu item has the arrowhead and the x/y coordinates of the mouse pointer.

This allows you to make changes to the up-coming sub-menu before it is displayed i.e. you are able to alter sub-menus dynamically. (Keen Basic programmers will have noticed the RETURN with the first parameter of the above user-function. Yes, you could actually change the sub-menu handle completely here, to bring up a totally different sub-menu.)

You'll recall that we attached the same sub-menu to both Item1 and Item 2 of mainmenu%. Well, this is where we change those sub-menus dynamically so as to display logically. Firstly, introduce a CASE structure by making things look like this:

```
DEF PROCuser_overmenuarrow(RETURN
nextsubmenu%,
parentmenuitem%,x%,y%)
CASE nextsubmenu% OF
WHEN submenu%
CASE parentmenuitem% OF
WHEN 1
PROCwimp_putmenutitle(submenu%,"Top
")
WHEN 2
PROCwimp_putmenutitle(submenu%,"Bot
tom")
ENDCASE
ENDCASE
ENDPROC
```

What this is saying is "When the pointer moves over an arrowhead leading to the sub-menu with the handle submenu% (and remember there are two cases where this will be true) then change the title of submenu% to correspond with the particular menu item where the arrowhead appears." In other words, submenu% will appear with "Top" as its title if the pointer moves over the arrowhead against the first item of mainmenu%, and "Bottom" if it is the second item.

Save it and try it. See how it operates? Let's be a little more clever and make further changes so that when the sub-menu appears it displays the current state of the icons in the main window and sets things up so that we can also alter those icons from the sub-menus in the same way as pressing the radio icons.

Make the total user-function look like this:

```
DEF PROCuser_overmenuarrow(RETURN
nextsubmenu%,
parentmenuitem%,x%,y%)
CASE nextsubmenu% OF
WHEN submenu%
CASE parentmenuitem% OF
WHEN 1
PROCwimp_putmenutitle(submenu%,"Top
")
 IF FNwimp_geticonenable(main%,3)=1
THEN
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,1,1)
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,2,0)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,1,0)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,2,1)
ELSE
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,1,0)
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,2,1)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,2,0)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,1,1)
ENDIF
WHEN 2
PROCwimp_putmenutitle(submenu%,"Bot
tom")
 IF
FNwimp_geticonenable(main%,3)=1
THEN
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,1,0)
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,2,1)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,2,0)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,1,1)
ELSE
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,1,1)
PROCwimp_menutick(submenu%,2,0)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,1,0)
PROCwimp_menuenable(submenu%,2,1)
ENDIF
ENDCASE
ENDCASE
ENDPROC
```

You'll see that this is an expansion of the initial CASE statement above. If you now save this and try it out you will see something like this — assuming the top writable icon is enabled when you press Menu over the window.

As you can see, moving over Item 1 of mainmenu% gives sub-menu with the title "Top", a tick against the "Enable" item (indicating the top writable's current state) and the sub-menu items themselves being enabled/disabled to allow the only logical option currently available — as the top writable is already enabled, the only action option is to disable it.

Try all the other combinations to check that you follow the logic. The main remaining thing to be done now is to react to the user's sub-menu selections — so that they do the same as the radio icon selections.

The structure we need for this (in DEF PROCuser_menuselection) is as follows:

```
WHEN submenu%
CASE item% OF
 WHEN 1
IF
FNwimp_getmenutitle(submenu%)="Top"
THEN
Action to enable top writable &
disable bottom]
ELSE
[Action to enable bottom writable
& disable top]
ENDIF
WHEN 2
IF
FNwimp_getmenutitle(submenu%)="Top"
THEN
[Action to enable bottom writable
& disable top]
 ELSE
[Action to enable top writable &
disable bottom]
ENDIF
ENDCASE
```

Because we are using the same sub-menu twice, we need to be able to distinguish between a selection made from the sub-menu when it is attached to mainmenu% Item 1 and the same selection made when it is attached to Item 2. The simple way to do this is to check the sub-menu title text — as above. This routine is completed in detail in the !RunImage of !MyApp5 contained in the EndApp folder for this article on the Acorn User Web site.

Caret control

The final thing we need to look at is the control of the caret in the writable icons — so that the caret moves to the correct writable when we use the radio icons or the sub-menus.

The main point to note is that the caret can only appear in one place at a time — or not at all. The wimp-function we use is:

```
PROCwimp_putcaret(window%,icon%)
```

which will be self-explanatory by now.

You will find this wimp-function used in several places in the copy of !MyApp5 in the EndApp folder on the Acorn User Web site

Final comments

!MyApp5, as it now stands, is not a particularly useful application, but it more than adequately demonstrates how some quite tricky operations can be set up with ease and flexibility using Dr Wimp.

In the next exciting episode we will have a look at file loading starting from where we finished this time.

Contacts

Download the Dr Wimp package from my web-site at:

www.argonet.co.uk/users/rayfavre

and this site also contains details of my books "Starting Basic" and "Dr Wimp's Surgery" which are sold entirely for charity.

Email: rayfavre@argonet.co.uk

Exceptionally, printed versions of the separate panels missing from the first article of this series are also available on receipt of an SAE at the address below.

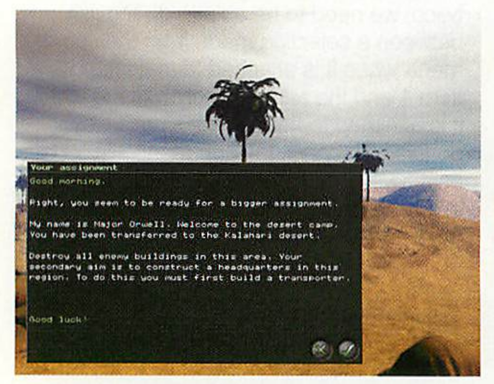
If you do not have Internet access then a copy of the latest Dr Wimp package can always be obtained by sending a formatted (1.6Mb) floppy disc and return postage stamps to:

Ray Favre, 26 West Drayton Park Avenue, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QA, U.K.

Future War

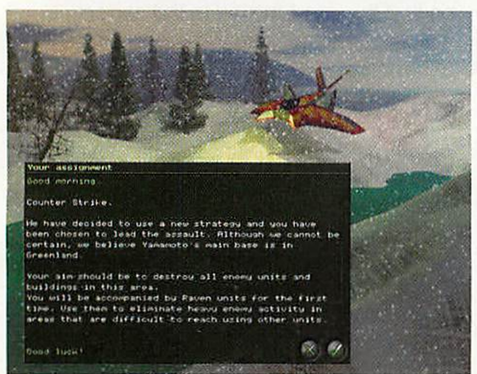
Last issue we reviewed the great new game that is TEK, at that time we were unable to bring you pictures of the game in action. This time around we have managed to persuade an avid game player to take TEK to the highest level that they can reach and take screenshots on the way up.

So without further ado we present images from a future war.







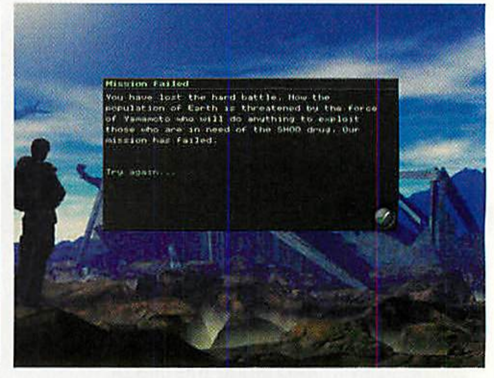








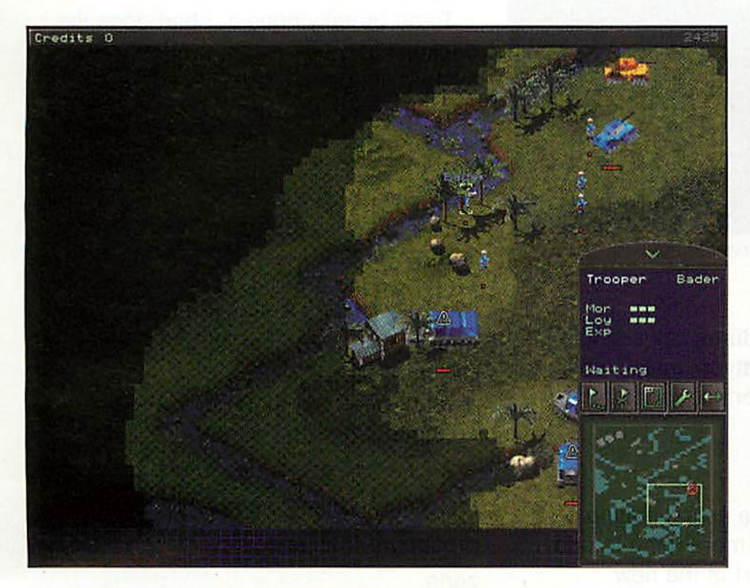




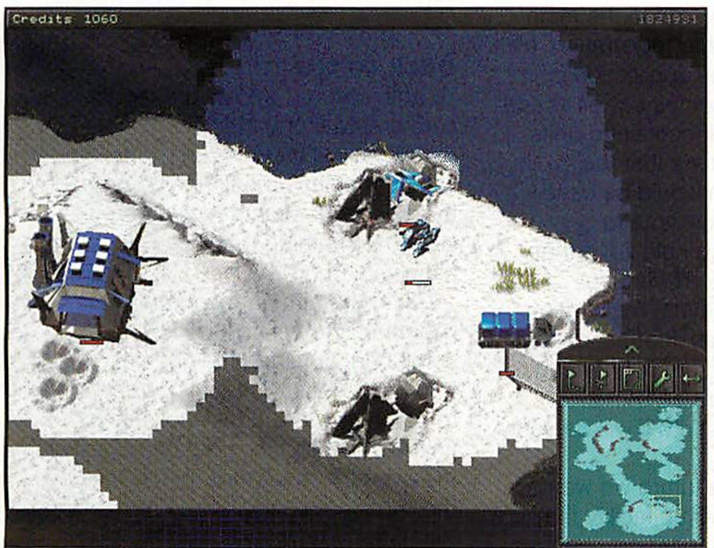




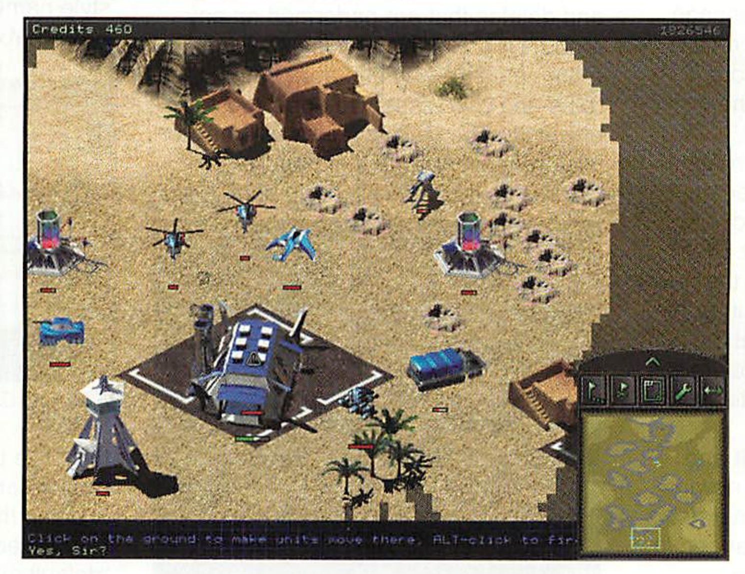












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Part 7: Tracking media

In the last issue we covered the beginning of the creation of a real part of the application, the basic record we intend to use, the "mediatype". We got as far as building the main zone window with its three buttons to create, alter and delete records. Though clicking on any of these simply generates an error at present.

This time around we are going to look at the creation process, although we may not have any way of editing or deleting them after we have managed the creation bit. This section will use much of the structures we have created recently plus add to what we have already done.

The first thing to look at is a slight modification to the zone click handler, we had this set up originally with a simpler set of instructions, this has now been expanded somewhat (Figure I).

```
curzone = proc control_find_zone(@handle)
if (curzone=CTRL_ZONE_NONE) then return

local zname = @trim(ctrl_zones[curzone].name)
ok=FALSE
zrnew=-1

case @clickelementlabel
  when "new"
    @exec("proc "+zname+"_new(@handle,zrnew,ok)")

  when "edit"
    @exec("proc "+zname+"_edit(@handle,zrnew,ok)")

  when "delete"
    @exec("proc "+zname+"_delete(@handle)")

  otherwise
    @exec("proc "+zname+"_zoneclick(@handle,@clickelementlabel)")

  endcase

card set handle @handle
```

Figure I: New code for the zone click handler

All we have done is modified the parameters slightly for _new and _edit. In the former we specify the zone card handle (just in case we want to change anything), zrnew will contain the record number of the newly created record if any, and ok specifies whether a new record was actially created.

The same applies to the _edit routine except that zrnew contains the record number of the record to be edited. However at this point it is not set.

We now direct our attention to the new procedures we are going to use in order to actually create and edit mediatype records. Note that the same structure will be used in other procedures dedicated to editing other types of record.

Figure II shows the _new, _edit and _delete routines. Notice how in _new both zr and ok are "return" parameters, this means if their values are changed in the procedure the new values are transferred back to the calling procedure.

For _edit that isn't true for the zr variable, we are editing a specific record and its number is not going to change after it has been edited.

```
def proc mediatype_zoneclick(h,e)
enddef

|==================================================================

def proc mediatype_new(h,return zr,return ok)
  zr=-1
  proc mediatype_make(zr,ok)
enddef

def proc mediatype_edit(h,zr,return ok)
  proc mediatype_make(zr,ok)
enddef

def proc mediatype_delete(h)
enddef
```

Figure II: The basic routines for handling record creation and editing

Both of these procedures call a single routine called "mediatype_make" which handles the user interface for creating and editing records.

Registration

Before we go into the actual editing of records there is one more thing to add which is a critical part of the new structure. We have covered in the main "app" how we set up the "registration" of the various parts of the application in such a way that it becomes easier to add and subtract those self-contained units.

I also stated at the time that the concept of registration would be used elsewhere. Well it is now time to implement that. Every single zone that edits a record needs to have this registration capability. What registration means is: The zone has information that other parts of the program might need to know about. Any other part of the program that registers with it will be sent that information.

At some point in the future we want to be able to set up a backup facility that keeps track of all the creations, changes and deletes that are performed on any record type. But this needs to be done in a non-intrusive way in order to permit the "plug and play" aspect to apply most efficiently. The backup facility will register itself with every zone that handles records so it can be informed of all creates, edits and deletes.

```
def proc mediatype_init
  mediatype_curitem=-1
  dim s mediatype_items[MEDIATYPE_MAXITEMS]

  return TRUE
enddef

def proc mediatype_startup
  mediatype_zonenum = proc control_register_zone("mediatype","Media types")
  return TRUE
enddef

def proc mediatype_poststart
  return TRUE
enddef

def proc mediatype_windup
  return TRUE
enddef

|==============================================================

def proc mediatype_register_item(ii)
  mediatype_curitem+=1
  mediatype_items[mediatype_curitem]=ii
  return mediatype_curitem
enddef

def proc mediatype_event(e)
  local i
  ffor i=0 to mediatype_curitem
    @exec("proc "+mediatype_items[i]+"_"+e)
    next
enddef

|==============================================================
```

Figure III: The standard registration code

To be brutally honest, I had done the backups in a different way, I had the system set up to explicitly call the backup procedures at the appropriate points. Until I realised that that was not the right way to proceed. There are some inefficiencies involved in doing it this way but that is offset by the more elegant implementation — art applies to programming as well.

Figure III shows the standard code for registration, it does require the additional constant MEDIATYPE_MAXITEMS, I use a value of 10 but that can easily be changed if needed.

As we now build the various parts of the record editing we must use call the procedure that issues events for this zone.

Back to the media

To edit a record we need a record-editing card created, open the Templates resource and create a new template called "mediatype edit" based on one of the existing template types. Reduce the size to something that looks like the one shown in Figure IV.

Using the appearance part of the "About this template" window, remove the scroll bars but keep the title bar, close and back icons. Use the "Try out" button to see how the window looks in its finished state. Once you are happy with the overall appearance, click Menu over the "About this template" window. Go to the "Create new style" sub-menu, give it a style name of "edit card" and press Return. You can use

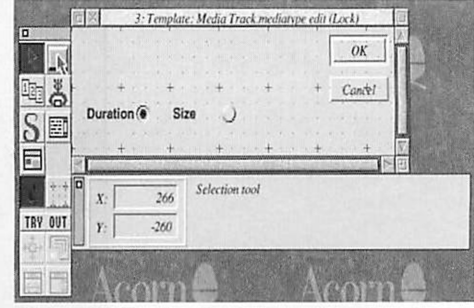


Figure IV: Creating the edit card template

this style by name in future now for similar cards.

Using the "Create icons" tool add an icon called 'okay' and give it a style of "default action". Click on the Buffer 'S' so that the writeable icon becomes active and type in the word "Ok". Click OK and see the button you've created. Switch back to the selection tool and move the button into position.

Do the same for the Cancel button but

this is just an action button, give it the name 'cancel'. Now create a radio button with the text "Duration" (name 'duration') in the "About this icon" scroll down and select the ESG button and type in the number 1. In my template I have changed the font style to the "Prompt" style and altered the relationship of the text and the icon so that the text is on the left.

Go back to the selection tool, click on

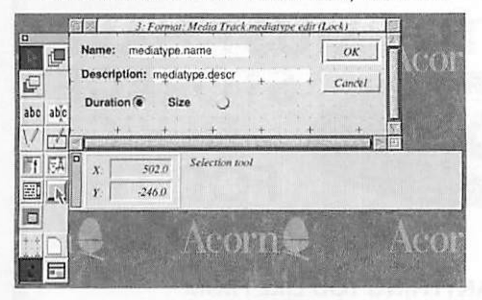


Figure V: Creating the edit card format

the "Duration" icon and press Control+C, type in the new name 'size' then alter the text for this icon to be "Size". Copying is the best option here because it creates an identical icon including the correct ESG group.

ESG stands for Exclusive Selection Group. With radio buttons which have an ESG of the same number, only one radio button can be selected at one time.

Close the template and go to the Formats resource, press Control+N, type in "mediatype edit". The template of the same name will automatically be placed in the template name. Click OK.

The icons currently shown in the format won't actually work. They need to be converted, select the Create format icons tool, and drag box that covers everything in the window and release. Every icon will now be selected and will now be format icons. If you move them in this window they will move in the template resource as well.

Now we have to create the Name and Descriptions fields and labels. Select the Create format prompts tool and click in the window you'll get a window like Figure VI.

Enter "Prompt 0" as the label, notice the Type and Area settings (we will come to this another time). No handler set is required, change the Font style to Prompt. In the expression type in the text "Name:" and leave the Data type as it is. Click OK and choose the selection tool to move the element to its correct position. You can do the same for "Description".

Now we come to the crux of record entry and editing, data entry fields. In the creation process this is just the same as for labels above.

Notice in Figure VII the information that has been typed in but the critical part is the expression. This gives the record name plus the field (name) that is applicable in this case. Creating a field of this sort means that the current contents of the field is displayed in the card, but if it is altered the new value is placed in the expression. Instant

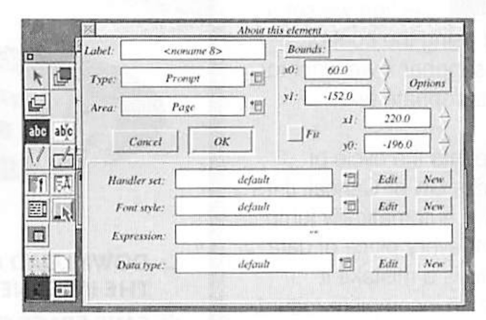


Figure VI: Creating a label for the edit record

record editing. More complex schemes are available but we probably won't use them.

Repeat for description, also for duration and size.

The mediatype record has four fields that need to be edited directly: Name, description, duration and size with the assumption that the latter two are mutually exclusive. We now have a card that can be used to edit those values now it needs to be incorporated into the main program, this involves code in the mediatype procedure resource and an edit card handler. First the main code.

Blow by blow editing

Right here we go, looking at Figure VIII which contains the complete editing code. There are two conditions under which this routine is called, for creation (zr=-1) or for editing (zr<>-1).

The local command sets up zh as the card handle and zv as a true/false variable used in one place. These are the easy items, and in the next line we

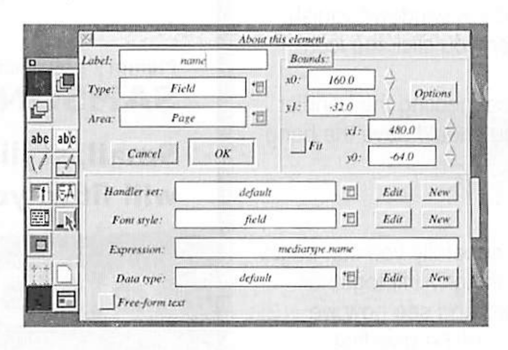


Figure VII: Creating a new data field

ensure ok is set to FALSE.

We have a variable called crc. Old hands at the programming game will recognise this abbreviation for cyclic redundancy check, this is a method of creating a single value based on a whole series of memory locations. It usually used to check to see if the contents of a data block has been altered. It is very sensitive to differences and produces radically different results if the tiniest change (maybe just one bit) occurs in the block being checked.

In this case we are checking for differences in a data block but for a different reason. I use it to see if a record has been altered, we calculate a crc value at the start, and then check again at the end. If the crc value is the same we can be fairly sure that nothing has changed, but if different something has definitely been altered.

It is a tiny thing but it can be used to avoid re-saving a record unnecessarily, it can also be used to check whether the user wants to save an altered file. S-Base does actually have a function that provides this type of check but it doesn't



```
def proc mediatype_make(return zr,return ok)
  local zh,crc=-1,mt=mediatype,zv
  ok=FALSE

  if (zr=-1)
      zero mediatype
      mediatype.id=proc mediatype_id
    else
      load mediatype,zr
      crc=proc reccrc("mediatype")
    endif

  proc control_zwin_new(mediatype_zonenum,"mediatype edit",zh)
  if (zr=-1)
      card set header zh,"New Media Type"
    else
      card set header zh,"Edit Media Type '"+@trim mediatype.name+"
    endif

  proc control_zwin_show(mediatype_zonenum,zh)
  repeat
    zv=TRUE
    card check zh
    card poll zh
    if (ok) then zv=proc mediatype_verified
    until (zv)

  proc control_zwin_dispose(mediatype_zonenum,zh)

  if (zr=-1)
      if (ok)
          create mediatype
          zr=@record(mediatype)
          proc mediatype_event("create(zr)")
        endif
    else
      if (ok)&&(crc<>proc reccrc("mediatype"))
          update mediatype,zr
          proc mediatype_event("edit(zr)")
        endif
    endif

  mediatype=mt
enddef
```

Figure VIII: The complete editing code

work in all situations. This is more reliable though there are also things this check won't notice — more of which another time. For now assume it is good enough.

The other significant item is the "mt=mediatype". When a file is created it is automatically allocated an area of memory, its memory buffer. When records are loaded into memory they are loaded into this memory buffer and can be accessed using the "mediatype.name"-type of construct.

However you can refer to the whole memory buffer area in one go. The instruction "mt=mediatype" turns "mt" into a memory buffer of the same size as mediatype and puts all the current data from the mediatype buffer into it.

At the end of this _make procedure you can see we have the opposite command "mediatype=mt". What this pair of commands does is preserve any existing contents of the mediatype buffer and restores it at the end.

The next block of code sets up the mediatype buffer, if it's a create action blank out any former contents of the mediatype buffer and then set the record's 'id' to some unique value.

```
local znn=@trim(ctrl_zones[curzone].name)

case @clickelementlabel
  when "okay"
    ok=TRUE
    card exit poll @handle

  when "cancel","<close>","<scared>"
    ok=FALSE
    card exit poll @handle

  otherwise
    @exec("proc "+znn+"_cardclick(@handle,@clickelementlabel)")

endcase
```

Figure IX: The edit card click handler

Otherwise load the record to be edited and calculate its crc.

In the next section we set up the record editing card. First we create the card using the control procedure (so that we can make this window disappear if we want to) and then change the title of the card to some appropriate text message.

The next section shows the card and then repeats the cycle of entering the polling of the card until the user clicks OK or Cancel. If it's Cancel then we just exit the loop, but if it's OK we automatically jump to a verify routine. The verify routine ensures that every piece of data that should be entered has been entered, if there is a mistake it generates an error and won't let the user create an incomplete record. The "card check" command is needed in the loop to clear the "OK" mouse click out of the buffer otherwise just one click keeps getting processed.

Then we get rid of the window, the record is either ignored (cancel) or, it is created or updated as appropriate. Then a mediatype event is generated, telling whoever wants to know that a mediatype record has either been created or updated.

The backup code (when included) will have hooked into this and will make a note of the changes in case we have to go back and restore the data from a previous version.

Running the code now will allow you to pop-up the record editing card when either the New or Edit buttons are clicked in the Zone window. The radio buttons will work and you can type data into the fields but the OK and Cancel buttons won't work.

Figure IX shows the click handler containing a case statement which handles the clicking of the various buttons in the window. The "okay" code is fairly straightforward and the "cancel" code is similar but has two other possible options to perform a close.

The option "<close>" is a pseudo-button click which is generated when the user clicks on a window's Close box. While "<scared>" is used to create a scared card. This is a card that vanishes if the user clicks somewhere else in the application. This card must be the topmost card and must be the only one being edited, a click anywhere else causes this card to go through its exit cycle.

To stop it being a scared card you just remove that option, but leave it in for safety. Another point here is that if you are editing a record and click on the control window to make the zone disappear, the card gets scared and is cancelled.

If, on the other hand, you click on the icon all the windows vanish but the card isn't scared and will reappear when you click the icon again.

We will leave creating the Handler Set and connecting the handler to the card as an exercise for the reader — you should have the hang of it by now.

Summary

Once again we've covered a lot of ground but hopefully you can begin to see the pattern emerging of how the whole thing will fit together.

Next time we will return to the main zone card and see how we make it display a list of all the records — which will be give first introduction to Queries.

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Web Directory: PHSE and Citizenship

Citizenship Pieces

www.citizenship-pieces.org.uk

This Web site is split into teacher and pupil from its first screen. The idea behind it is to share good practice whether you're interested in setting up a School Council or circletime. For the teacher there are some practical ideas such as Project Charlie, a drug education programme building health, self-esteem, responsibility and decision making skills among others.

Add to this a debate and presentation initiative aimed at Years 5 and 6 or an exhibition put together by children in Spitalfields working with artists, poets and actors. For children the emphasis is firmly set on school councils, but in making them a proactive and positive force offering advice and information on constitutions and roles. A site to dip into now and again.

Global Footprints

www.globalfootprints.org

Aimed at primary schools the emphasis is on creating a sustainable future. A well-designed and good looking site, it has some nice touches and some interesting resources which makes it the more usable of the two sites here. For instance, the questionnaire making you think about the impact your school is having socially and environmentally with a similar quiz aimed at Year 4-6 in the kid's section.

An intelligent site full of facts and questions for PHSE lessons, but also inspiring you to use these issues in other subjects, and to make sure you do there are literacy and numeracy activities ready for you to download for Year 3 upwards! One I'll be certainly be using in future.

Citizenship Foundation

www.citfou.org.uk

Case studies and news from the Citizenship Foundation, an independent charity working to promote more effective citizenship through education about the law, democracy and society. There is discussion on rights and duties of citizenship, the workings of the political, social, and legal systems and the democratic process. In particular, the Foundation seeks ways of enriching provision for those for whom the quality of citizenship would otherwise be poor.

DfES - Citizenship

www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship

A site for teachers, students as well as parents and governors. There is a link to OFSTED inspection guidance at www.ofsted.gov.uk/public/index.htm as well as guides for court visits and news of the Association for Citizenship Teaching.

Institute for Citizenship

www.citizen.org.uk

The strapline on this Web site is reaching out, tackling apathy, stimulating debate and promoting awareness. An attractive site which includes links to the community and discussion boards. There is a good European dimension with two current debates entitled Speak Out! an educational online discussion on European citizenship and a second on Europe and its Citizens — the Future which takes the form of a nationwide round table discussion.

Time for Citizenship

www.timeforcitizenship.com/default /index.asp?intro=tony&t=welcome

With support from all the main political parties and a welcome message from Tony Blair, this site aims to bring together active communities and as with most of these sites demonstrate good practice within this new curriculum area. Each term has a different topic such as Healthy Lifestyle. But there are games, competition, challenges, quizzes and activities to suit different learning and teaching styles.

Schools are asked to register (for free) and this site operates on three levels: children exchange ideas through a scrolling notepad (school forum). Here they are also given the opportunity to display artwork and ideas of citizenship. Then the teacher's level holds downloadable field-tested citizenship lessons from the site and the opportunity to obtain information from colleagues regarding citizenship education. There is a section for Police Liaison Officers who are able to select lessons which will assist them in their work in schools. There are also ideas and activities to get parents involved.

Citizenship

www.savethechildren.org.uk/education /citizenship.html

Part of Save the Children's Education Unit here they are promoting citizenship in schools and offers a range of free and commercial materials and services to teachers. They too other sample lesson plans for Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 16+, each having curricular links for England, Scotland and Wales. Some lesson plans are available in Welsh too. For instance, Rights and Violence looks at rights and children's personal experiences of violence and conflict in their own lives.

Using bullying as a starting point, children can use Chol's story of violence in Sudan to explore wider global issues of war and conflict. These lesson plans, suitable for children aged 7-11, can be used in a flexible way, either as one-off lessons or as the basis for a whole term's work. Most of the activities can be completed within 40 minutes, and have accompanying activity sheets. The activities can be used across the curriculum, but are especially appropriate for the Citizenship curriculum.

More unusual and interesting is Get Global! a research project to help teachers facilitate and assess active Global Citizenship. So access Back to School which looks at the issue of the millions of children who have been forced from their homes by conflict. Many remain within their own countries but their lives and education continue to be disrupted by the ongoing conflict. Here you can find case studies that provide first-hand accounts from children in Angola, Colombia and Kosovo.

Learn.co.uk

www.learn.co.uk/citizenship

Part of the Guardian newspaper site, here there are sections on Managing citizenship, Citizenship lessons, Online events and Resources. Here are over 100 pages of advice on citizenship and reviews the resources you'll use to teach it. The lesson plans can be used to teach a discrete lesson or through other subjects such as history, geography or science. One example being, Crime.

Topical lesson packs show how headline events can be taught in class and students can take part in online events to discover more about their rights and responsibilities and what it means to be a citizen, for instance The Euro.

UNICEF - citizenship

www.unicef.org.uk/education /citizen.htm

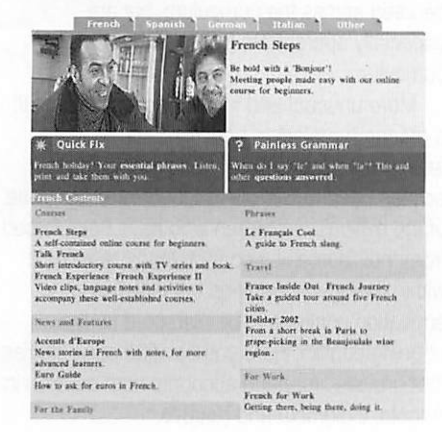
Talking the idea of human rights and responsibilities these are put into a global concept and then back to a local one. The idea being that teaching about the reciprocity of children's rights can be a force for good in school, greatly enhancing pupil-pupil, pupil-staff relationships.

The reason being that rights cannot be addressed in a vacuum. Of the three human rights documents: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is given the emphasis here as the rights of the young citizen - students in KS3 and 4.

Interestingly, UNICEF offer trained professionals to run Inset sessions for staff on what the Convention on the Rights of the Child really says, activities and resources for the classroom, and to facilitate discussion about how to integrate it into your Citizenship curriculum and the school. Best of all it's free!

Web directory - Modern Languages

FRENCH



Learn French

www.bbc.co.uk/education/languages/french/index.shtml

Part of the comprehensive BBC site. Here you have access to Bonjour and French Steps online courses for beginners. There are also boxes giving links to particular problem areas, for instance when to say le and la. The BBC's TV/book/CD-ROM courses such as French Experience are also supported here with video clips, language notes and activities. For the more advanced there are news stories in French with notes. While for revision there is Bitesize French.

For the dabbler there are sections on how to ask for euros in French, as well as essential holiday phrases ready to be listened to and then printed out. In addition there is a learning game to be played with your children at home or school. a guide to French slang and the opportunity to take a guided tour around five French cities. An excellent site.

Momes

www.momes.net

All in French this site offers poems, current affairs and even discussion about the work of David Hockney. One for the proficient reader.

Jeannot le Lapin Fou

http://perso.wanadoo.fr/jielge

A curious site featuring the 19 cartoon adventures of Jeannot the mad rabbit and his friends. Again all in French, it might inspire your class to create their own story. One to use as a resource to be adapted for your students.

ZipZap - France

www.zipzapfrance.com

Another well thought-out site here. You find yourself on a tour of France which can be accessed in English or French. A well-designed and easily accessible site which is attractive featuring useful activities such as choosing five words for a postcard which sum up France and then email to a friend. A site to cover the essentials of the country, language traditions and innovations.

The French Teacher

www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~thecroft/index.htm

As the name suggests one for the teacher rather than the student. Not the most attractive site around but it does offer exercises for Years 7 to 9 on topics such as hobbies, animals, school and the like and presented as cloze procedures, quizzes and matching exercises. While GCSE revision is available too in a range of formats from a quiz for one or two players, as well as matching, to concentration exercises and wordsearches.

Funambule

www.funambule.com/cgi-bin/tv5.asp

Learning and teaching French with TV5. All in French with interactive exercises and links to TV series. Look at the video clips and answer the questions. Well set out and not needing huge amount of French knowledge to use.

Asterix

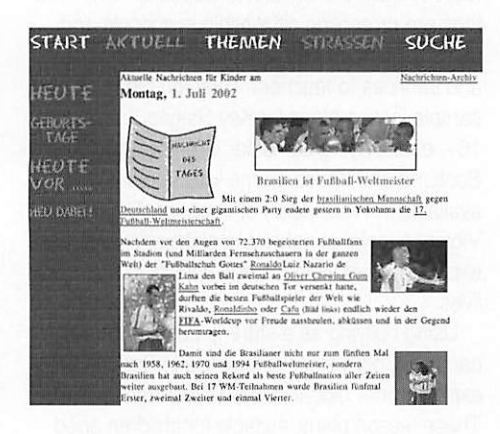
www.asterix.tm.fr/france/index.asp?f=1

Games, information about the characters and news. One for fans but also allows for research and creativity for those not totally new to the language.

Bonjour de France

www.bonjourdefrance.com

An interactive Web site for practising French. There is lots in here from vocabulary to idioms all in a magazine environment. Some exercises ask you to listen, others to read carefully.



GERMAN

Learn German

www.bbc.co.uk/education/languages/german/index/htm

Again from the BBC site and following the same format. For the beginner there are handy phrases for shopping with our short introductory course to go with the TV series. There is also an additional section on how to ask for euros in German.

While for schools that use Deutsch Plus video clips, language notes and activities are provided to accompany this well-established course. Which naturally leads into GCSE Bitesize German and the chance to revise the GCSE German syllabus and test yourself.

For those who need to find out about the country there is a guided tour through modern Germany and information on working in Germany.

Goethe Institute Materials

www.goethe.de/s/demindex.htm

All in German you'll find information on where to find information, as well as Web projects and links to literature and culture. Not the most friendliest of sites for newbies and not aimed at younger students, but good quality information on the language and culture.

Quia- German

www.quia.com/dir/german/

Hosts activities which have been created by Quia's subscribers and are of varying quality so don't allow children on here before checking grammar and spelling. If you subscribe to Quia you may copy any of the activities and modify them for your own use. A good idea but there needs to be some quality control installed. The search facility is a good idea listing the 20 most popular activities in a topic are listed below. On offer you can have a vocabulary review on animals or furniture, or how about a guide to numbers? Then there's reading skills advise for GCSE German and a Millionaire game and other quizzes to test German knowledge.

Sowieso

www.sowieso.de

A colourful Web site in German for younger children. Calling itself an online newspaper for children, it has the right look and as to content? Covering a range of subjects from politics to sport you can find pen friends here too. All in German.

KinderWeb

www.uncg.edu/~lixlpurc/school/Kinder.html

For children learning German this is a useful site written in German for teenagers and with features on games,

sports, chatrooms and a MUD! Useful for conversational skills, there are links to school too and a link to the German World Wildlife Fund. Well worth a visit.

Kidlane
www.kidlane.de
A newspaper with up-to-date features and access to an archive so you can see news and breaking stories from a German perspective.

Jetzt
http://jetzt.sueddeutsche.de/
Another online magazine with a more professional feel as it's associated with the Sueddeutsche Zeitung. It features vary from football to cartoons (Buttonman) and interviews, letters page and reviews. You can also link to German radio.



ITALIAN

I Teach Italian
www.geocities.com/Athens/Styx/6960/
This looks promising and the ready-made activities section leads you to reviews, in English, of sites offering courses and information for students to use with a concentration on grammar and has done an awful lot of leg work for you. For instance, Universita' di Venezia where recipes and poetry are used as starting point for language observation and use with exercises and grammar notes are linked to the texts. An interesting feature of the site is the possibility to take an on-line test of competence: answer the questions, and you'll receive your results by email.
There are also links to useful Italian sites as well as information on jobs, e-mailing, journals and conference papers.

Picture Dictionary
www.pdictionary.com/italian
An English site which provides an illustration dictionary for Italian but with links to French, German and Spanish versions too. But the graphics have been put to extra use to providing you with flashcards, cloze and activities with names such as Word Scramble, Stinky Spelling and Straight Recall. You can browse by letter or by category with animals, appliances, body parts, clothing, colours, fruits, garden, kitchen, music, numbers, sports, tools, transport and vegetables on offer. Click on the subject and then on the word/picture you're interested in.

BBC Online

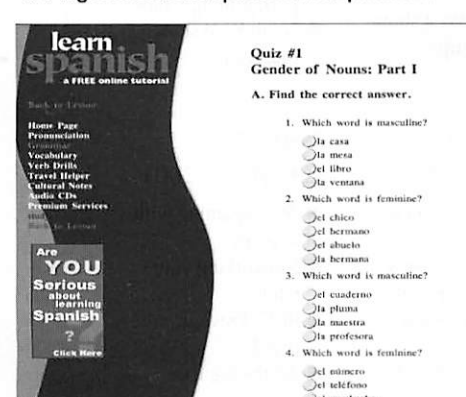
www.bbc.co.uk/education/languages/italian/
As with the other BBC language sites this does not just support their TV courses. For instance as well beginners courses centered around Siena's Palio, the famous bareback horse race and Italianissimo with its video clips, language notes and activities, there is a guided tour through Italy and links to Holiday 2002's visit to the Italian Lakes to the setting for Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Verona.

Il sito del gatto
http://web.tiscali/it/tizber/sissi/
A site for Italian children featuring the adventures of a cat and a mouse. There is a lot of text on the page, but it is quite easy to follow and could be used to add a different dimension to comprehension and translation and may even provoke students to write their own adventures.

Benvenuti A Bubilandia
www.areacom.it/arte_cultural//bubilandia/ent.html
A lot different this one as you're taken into a magic country where strange things happen. A curious and interesting site with good graphics and allows the more advanced to travel around the virtual world practising their Italian comprehension as they go. Meet fantastical creatures and read their descriptions ready to use in your own work.

SPANISH

Spanish Radio
www.geocities.com/spanishradio/spain.htm



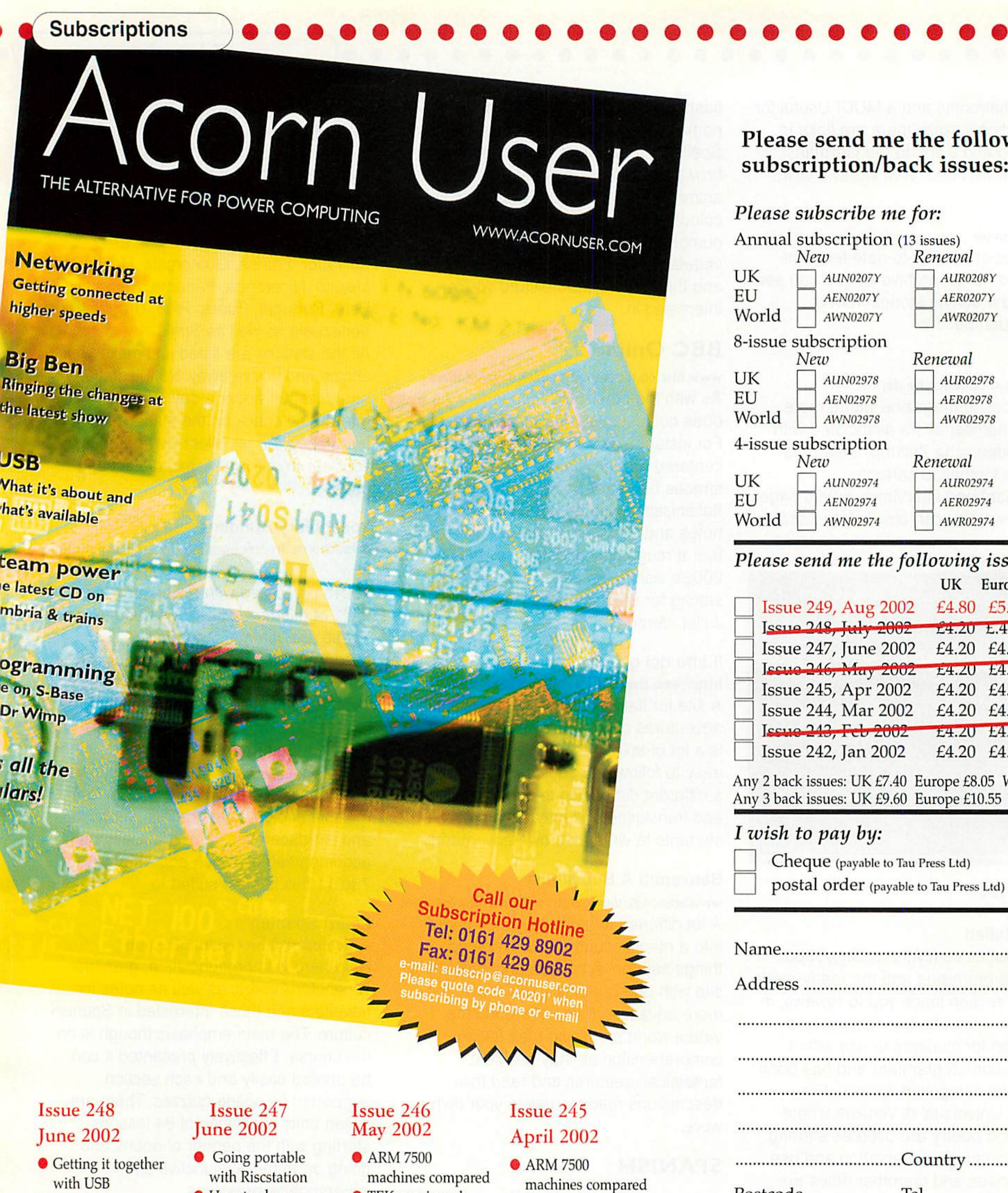
You can listen to radio in a host of languages which is one of the wonders of the Internet and is best received over broadband. When it comes to Spanish you can hear radio from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Venezuela as well as Spain.
All the stations are listed just make your choice and you're away. Not all stations broadcast 24 hours a day over the Internet so check on the station's homepage. An excellent way of tuning in your ear to colloquialisms, dialect and pace.

Vocabulary Building
http://home.freeuk.com/linguacentral/spvocab.htm
You're presented with a workman-like table of different activities for you to use. These are categorised under Miscellaneous Vocabulary, Numbers & Dates, Personal Descriptions, Family & Pets, School, Transport, Countries, Time, Weather, Home, Food, Daily Routine, and Hobbies. Some are better supported than others, but all come with information as to what type of activity is available from multiple choice, to anagrams , matching and wordsearches. In addition each is accompanied by which age range - Year 7 to 11 this is most suited to.

Learn Spanish
www.studyspanish.com/tutorial.htm
Help here with pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, verbs, as well as notes for travellers and those interested in Spanish culture. The main emphasis though is on the course. Effectively presented it can be printed easily and each section supported by online quizzes. There are seven units consisting of 84 lessons starting with the gender of nouns and going on to the Subjunctive and impersonal expressions.

Learning Resources
www.beauchamp.leics.sch.uk/faculty/lang/spres.htmb
There are revision activities here for GCSE and A level. So you can download role play and conversations from a basic level to more advanced discussions on home and abroad. Not a huge language resource, but for A level students it gives you a UK-based resource at a high level.

Pam Turnbull
educ@acornuser.com



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Creating the future

Like other RISC OS users I want to see our platform thrive. If the customer base for hardware and software is to be maintained or to increase, surely more 'killer apps' are needed? Also, some advertising to bring the platform to the attention of potential new customers, otherwise they will probably just go out and buy a PC without even considering RISC OS.

There has been considerable investment in new hardware, and in RISC OS 4 in the last few years, and there is certainly some good quality software around. If this investment is to fully pay off, and if there is to be a bright future, then I believe that further investment in some popular software, and advertising in non RISC OS publications is essential.

Examples of software that I believe would sell well would be: a good encyclopedia with updates (maybe a 'port' of 'Encarta'?); A UK road atlas with route planning and updates; a player for MPEG video; A player for 'Real Audio' and other popular audio streaming and file formats found on the Internet (I know we have MP3 players); Internet video/audio conferencing software.

The introduction of the long-awaited USB port will hopefully open the door for a host of USB drivers for peripherals such as: Web cams; still cameras; joysticks; GPS maps; and printers. This could give a real boost to the RISC OS market if the opportunity is grabbed. (When will we actually see the USB podule for the Risc PC?)

A good point was made in the June Acorn User about who is going to pay for the development of new software? Buying our consumables from RISC OS dealers would no doubt help, but if software developers don't want to, or cannot, go to their bank managers for business development loans, then I for one, would be willing to demonstrate my commitment by paying money up-front (before development) for the right applications.

This could work as long as there was some guarantee that money could be refunded if the software was not available in a specified time, such as a year. Also, maybe there could be more co-operation between several developers so that software could be produced more quickly.

Chris Dale
Solihull, West Midlands

These are valid points, and I'm sure offers of financial help would certainly be appreciated. There is at least one organisation behind the scenes that is helping to back new developments in the market.

Regarding your point on cooperation, the NET100 card was of course the perfect example of what can be achieved with a few companies working together. And Castle has its own partners as well, though they are less enthusiastic about being named. I think the best answer to your comment regarding the appearance of an actual USB card is along the lines of "real soon now".

It is the hardware that is actually the important factor, the existence of new hardware tends to encourage people and validate their confidence in and enthusiasm for the market as a whole.

However the idea that "we need more killer apps" is an easy thing to say but not an easy one to necessarily implement. Vantage is a "killer app" in some important respects Ñ for its target market Ñ but requires a really serious machine to run it on. Omega for example Ñ I doubt it was coincidence that Vantage was tested on the Omega as one of the first applications to be brought in from outside Microdigital for that purpose. Naturally it would benefit both parties if they made a good match.

But where would your killer app be located? Simply creating a "better" application is not really enough, it takes an awful lot to get someone to abandon an application they are happy with/used to. A killer app needs to be in an area that is unsatisfactorily served by existing software (if at all). I can think of a couple, potentially very high profile but no one is asking me.

Attempting to simply advertise a RISC OS product in a PC environment will be largely a waste of money. A lot of work comes before advertising is worthwhile. Only one business in the market is even rumoured to be able to handle that kind of cash.

The same problem applies to getting conversions of software Ñ you might be able to persuade a few companies to part with their code but that too would be a very expensive operation, far more than any company could expect to recoup in the current situation through sales.

Does this sound depressing? Well before you can hope to handle a situation you have to look at it realistically. And realistically the RISC OS market is in a difficult position.

But it's not an impossible situation, you actually don't need a great deal of money to start handling the problem but it does require imagination, leadership, a belief that it can be done, teamwork, PR and marketing skill with a big dollop of willingness to put in the amount of effort required.

We have hardware up and coming, this can be used as capital in a renaissance for RISC OS. More software is needed, yes and killer apps would be useful.

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